This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Tappan Presbyterian Association
LIBRARY.

Presented by HON. D. BETHUNE DUFFIELD.
From Library of Rev. Geo. Duffield, D.D.

Geo Duffield

Section _____
No _____

BX
9178
.W735

P555

THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF THE REVEREND AND LEARNED

MR JOHN WILLISON,

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT DUNDEE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL III.

CONTAINING

I. THE BALM OF GILEAD, FOR HEALING A DISEASED LAND, &c. &c. &c.

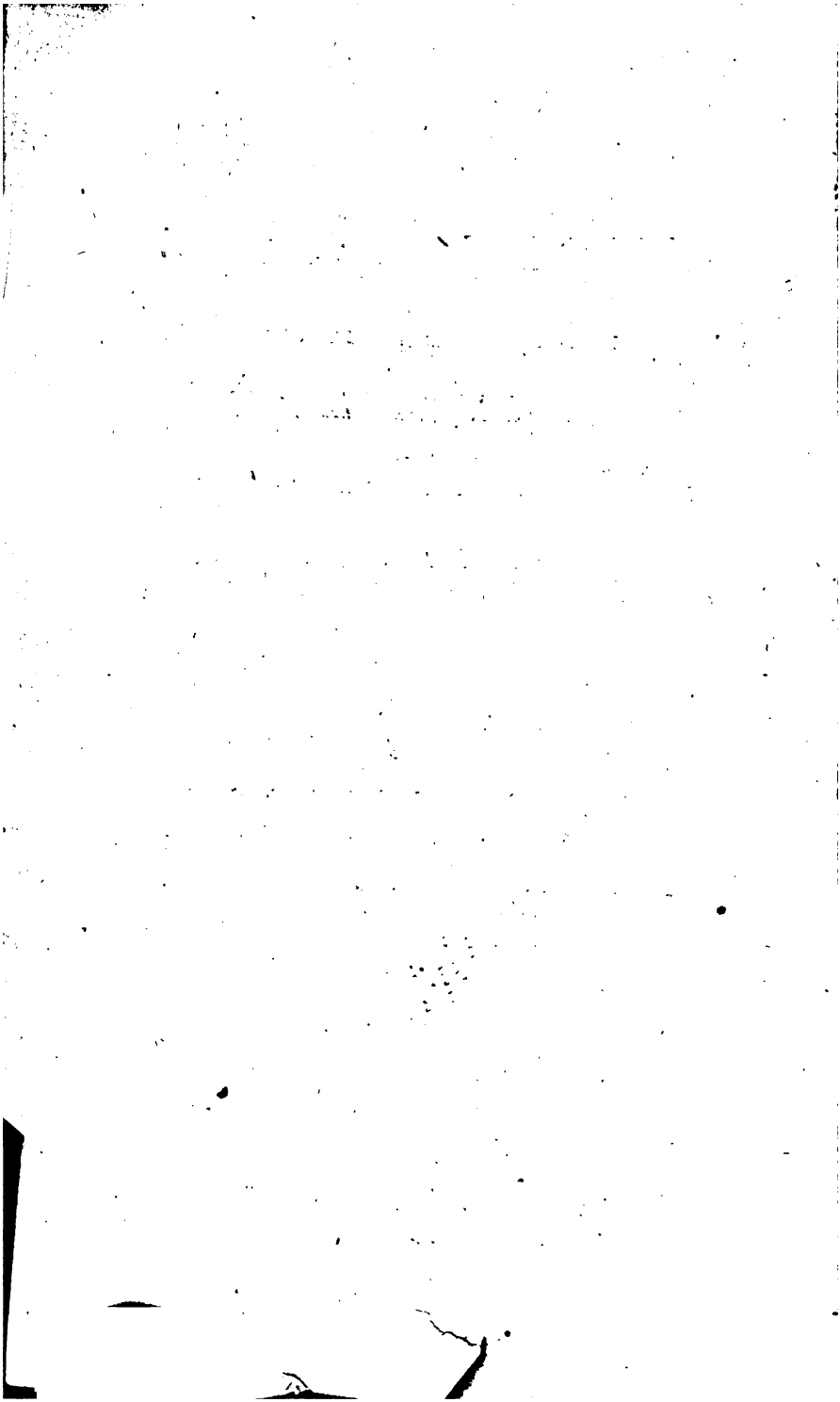
II. SACRAMENTAL MEDITATIONS, &c. CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY, &c. &c. &c.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY J. MOIR, PATERSON'S COURT,

For J. DICKSON, J. FAIRBAIRN, J. OGLE, J. GUTHRIE, *and* S. CHEYNE, *Edinburgh*: G. PRATTIE, *Leith*: M. OGLE, *Glasgow*: G. MILNE, *Dundee*: A. BROWN, *Aberdeen*: YOUNG & IMRAY, *Inverness*: and J. FORSYTH, *Elgin*.

1799.



Tappan Pres. Assoc'n.
gt
4-8-1924

THE

BALM OF GILEAD

FOR HEALING

A DISEASED LAND;

WITH

THE GLORY OF THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT:

AND

A SCRIPTURE PROPHECY *of the Increase of Christ's Kingdom, and the Destruction of Antichrist,*

Opened and applied in TWELVE SERMONS *upon several Texts.*

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

FIVE SERMONS,

Preached upon Sacramental occasions.

PSALM lxxii. 19.
Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

10-2-30 [illegible]

PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH theſe Sermons were preached in Scotland, and have ſome reference to the caſe of that church and land under her preſent diviſions and backſlidings; yet they are compoſed in ſuch a ſtrain, as to be uſeful and applicable to any church under the like diſtempers, which, alas! is the caſe of the moſt part. What remedies can be ſo effectual to cure them of theſe evils, as thoſe propoſed in the following Diſcourſes; to wit, the excellent Balm of Gilead, and the glorious miniſtration of the Spirit? If it were the gracious will of God to diſpoſe all the biſhops and miniſters of Britain and Ireland, to make it their buſineſs to open up and recommend theſe noble remedies to their people, it would contribute greatly to heal their maladies, and increaſe the kingdom of Chriſt in theſe lands. I cannot help thinking but thoſe who are conſecrated to ſpiritual offices would be more ſuitably and profitably employed in this work, than in attending courts, and purſuing ſecular deſigns.

Seeing now the arm of the Lord is beginning to awake, and many are excited to run to and fro for increaſing goſpel-knowledge, and labour to propagate the doctrine of ſalvation through the imputed righteouſneſs of the ſlain Lamb of God: And, ſeeing the Lord is pleaſed, in ſundry parts of the world, to give countenance to theſe endeavours by the out-pouring of his Spirit, for awakening many ſouls to an inquiry and ſearch after true happineſs through the bleſſed Jeſus,—It doth highly concern all goſpel-miniſters and preachers to concur in helping forward the Lord's work, by proclaiming the ſaving doctrine and offers of free grace to the world, and to exert themſelves for removing out of the way all letts and hinderances of the kingdom of Chriſt, that ſo his dominion may ſpread from ſea to ſea, through all nations of the earth.

In the following Sermons I have made ſome inquiry into the times and ſeaſons of the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom: and becauſe this is greatly connected with

the deſtruction of Antichriſt, I have mentioned ſome conjectures and calculations about the time of his fall: though I think none ſhould be too bold or peremptory in fixing the preciſe time, but all ought to wait patiently until God's ſet time ſhall come. All may now perceive Antichriſt viſibly riſen and diſcovered. Nay, we have ſeen him arrived at his pomp and height about 1500 years after Chriſt. Since that time the Lord hath begun to waſte and conſume him, by the revival of religion and learning in the world. As his riſe was gradual, ſo ſhall his conſumption be. He hath now been labouring under a deadly conſumption above theſe 200 years paſt. The wound given him is deep and mortal; ſo whatever pains be taken ſometimes to heal it, all ſhall be in vain: For, as Chriſt muſt increaſe, ſo Antichriſt muſt decreaſe, and be quite ruined at length, as is ſhewed in the following Diſcourſes. May all the lovers of Chriſt pray fervently, and look out for that bleſſed and joyful time.

DUNDEE,
Jan. 20. 1742.

THE

BALM OF GILEAD,

FOR HEALING

A DISEASED LAND

SERMON I.

JER. viii. 20, 21, 22.

The harveſt is paſt, the ſummer is ended, and we are not ſaved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt, I am black: Aſtoniſhment hath taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no phyſician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

IN the preceding part of this chapter we have repreſented a great deſtruction that God was about to bring upon a ſinful people, and the conſternation the whole land ſhould be in upon the alarm thereof. The ſins of Judah were come to a great height, whereby God was provoked to let looſe the Chaldeans againſt them. The prophet was himſelf an eye-witneſs of the oppreſſion and deſolation of his country and the church of God by the Chaldean army; and he foreſaw ſtill greater judgments and calamities coming upon them, whereby both he and the ſerious people of the land were greatly affected, and put to lament their caſe before the Lord. Among other things, they lament the diſappointment of their expectation of healing and deliverance from diſtreſs, ver. 15. "We looked for peace,

peace, but no good came, and for a time of health, and behold trouble." They ſometimes had hopeful and promiſing ſeaſons, when they expected relief; but after all their waiting they were diſappointed; theſe likely times of healing were loſt. Hence they are put to ſay, "The harveſt is paſt, the ſummer is ended, and we are not ſaved." Summer and harveſt are proper ſeaſons of action, opportunities for armies to take the field, to ſubdue enemies, and bring about deliverance for an oppreſſed people: The winter that follows is not a fit ſeaſon for action. It is ſad when likely ſeaſons, for ſaving a people from temporal enemies and grievances, are loſt; but it is yet ſadder for them to loſe hopeful and promiſing ſeaſons for ſaving of their ſouls. The loſs of ſuch harveſt or ſummer-days for our ſouls is the greateſt ground of lamentation. The prophet being deeply ſenſible of his peoples loſs and calamitous condition, he is grievouſly diſtreſſed for them, ver. 21. "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt, I am black," &c. *The daughter of my people* is a common Hebraiſm uſed in ſcripture, and it ſignifies the body of the people of Judah, which was God's viſible church upon earth; their hurt and diſtreſs did affect the holy man in the moſt tender manner, and drew forth his ſympathy with them. Upon this account, ſaith he, "I am black," I have loſt my wonted colour, my face is turned blackiſh, or I go in black, as mourners do. I am aſtoniſhed and troubled the more that I ſee no appearance of relief for them in their diſtreſs, their caſe ſeems to be hopeleſs and incurable. Upon which he puts the queſtion, ver. 22. "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no phyſician there? Why then," &c. Is there no balm for the diſtreſſed church, no phyſician for a diſeaſed land? It is generally thought the queſtion doth not import any deſpair or denial of help, but rather the contrary, as if he had ſaid, Is there no balm? Is there not a Phyſician? Yes, there is. The incurableneſs of their diſeaſe is not owing to the want of balm, or of a Phyſician in the land, but to themſelves and their unbelief. There was a ſufficient remedy

in

in God, and in the Meſſiah, for all their grievances, had they accepted and applied the ſame. Hence he adds that pertinent queſtion, "Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" *q. d.* What is the cauſe, then, or to whom is it to be imputed, that the church or people of Judah do ſtill lie in a dying caſe? ſurely not to the balm nor to the phyſician, but to their own folly and obſtinacy.

Queſt. What is here meant by the balm of Gilead?

Anſ. The land of Gilead, on the other ſide Jordan, was a part of the country of Iſrael, where that plant grew, which afforded a moſt precious balm for healing, when it was pierced; which was a rare and valuable commodity that other countries did traffick for with the land of Iſrael, Jer. xlvi 11. Ezek. xxvii. 17. And we ſee in Gen. xxxvii. 25. the Iſhmaelites that bought Joſeph, carried balm from Gilead into Egypt. Naturaliſts ſay, this balm was a juice or oil that run from a certain low ſhrub, when its bark was cut, that grew eſpecially about Jericho, in the land of Gilead, and was of great value, as having a ſovereign virtue to cleanſe foul ſores, heal deep wounds, help the eye-ſight, cure the ſtings of ſerpents, yea, it was a ſort of *catholicon* that cured almoſt all diſeaſes. This balm we may look upon as a fit type to repreſent Chriſt's blood, which is an excellent balm and *catholicon* for all diſeaſes of the ſoul: For God's diſpenſations to the Iſraelites were generally deſigned as types and ſigns of ſpiritual things under the New Teſtament times, according to 1 Cor. x. 11. "All theſe things happened unto them for enſamples." Orig. ΤΥΠΟΙ, *for types.*" And, among the reſt, this balm of Gilead was typical and inſtructive to the virtue of the Meſſiah's blood; for ſeeing God vouchſafed this balm to Iſrael only, and made other nations beholden to them for it, it teacheth us that the balm for healing ſouls is only in the church of God, and Chriſt is the true antitype of this balm; for in Judah's land only was Chriſt known, there they had his blood daily typified to them in the ſacrifices, and its virtue ſet forth.

Again,

velled. Or when the Spirit ſo faſtens the arrows of conviction on the conſcience, as to bring the man to a reſtleſs thoughtfulneſs about the guilt of his ſins, and his eternal ſtate, and to cry, "What ſhall I do to be ſaved?" And to make him diſſatisfied with all his earthly comforts, and ſay, "All theſe avail me nothing," while I go Chriſtleſs. O this is a harveſt-day of ſalvation, every minute of it is precious, and ſhould be carefully improved for the ſoul.

4. The time of ſatan's reſtraint is a ſeaſon not to be loſt. Sometimes the devil is ſo bound up, that he cannot diſturb the church by bloody perſecutions, or by errors and ſchiſms, as at other times; that is a fair ſummer-day of grace, which ſhould be well improved. Though we cannot ſay that ſatan at this time is altogether bound up; nay, he is wofully let looſe in reſpect of error and diviſion: but, bleſſed be God, he is reſtrained with reſpect to perſecution; ſo that, my brethren, he cannot preſently drive your teachers into corners, nor put you to ſeek your ſpiritual bread with the peril of your lives, becauſe of the ſword, in the wilderneſs, as ſometimes hath been the caſe in our land. O then, do not ſin away this calm ſummer-day, but, with earneſt attention and care, hearken to the ſweet voice of the *turtle*, which is ſtill to be heard through all corners of the land.

5. The time when God is viſiting a land with wakening and alarming diſpenſations of providence, is a ſeaſon to be carefully improved for ſaving of the ſoul. When God doth premoniſh us that either a ſtorm is coming on the church and land in general, or that death approaches us in particular, we ſhould take warning, like Noah, while the evils are at a diſtance, "be moved with fear, and provide an ark for the ſaving of our ſouls," before the flood of wrath come upon us. Nay, my friends, you have God to bleſs, that the *ark* is already prepared to your hand, and a window opened in the ſide of it for your entrance. May you be ſo wiſe as to take warning in time, get faith's wings, and flee into the ark Chriſt, before the flood ariſe, and before death come. You have had a long harveſt-day of grace

day:

in the land, and now have ſhrewd tokens of night approaching: You may look for the night of death, or the winter of deſolation, ſtrokes, perſecution, and darkneſs. Wherefore, as Chriſt ſaith, "Work, while it is day: yet a little while is the light with you, walk while you have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you. The night cometh (ſaith he) when no man can work." Surely it draws towards even-tide, and the night of death: Yea, a fearful night both of ſpiritual and temporal judgments ſeems to be drawing on; and ſhould not the remaining light or day be well employed? There are ſeveral ſigns of an approaching night.

1. When the force and heat of the ſun do abate, it draws towards night; ſo when the goſpel-ſun, or preaching of the word, hath little heat or effect upon ſinners cold hearts, it betokens night coming on. 2. When the ſhadows of the evening are ſtretched out and grow long, it is a ſign of approaching night. And, O how long are the ſhadows ſtretched out beyond the ſubſtance! How much doth the profeſſion of religion exceed the power of it at this day? 3. When the labourers go home from their work, it is a ſign the night comes on. Ah! how many of our choice and faithful labourers do we ſee going home, without others to fill their room? 4. When the evening wolves and beaſts of prey creep out of their holes, it is a token of night. And ſurely there have been evening wolves ſeen among us, who have intruded upon the vineyard, ſpoiled the vines, and miſerably ſcattered the flock of Chriſt. 5. Growing darkneſs is a forerunner of the night. Ah! how much doth darkneſs prevail among us at this time, yea, ſo much, that ſeveral of the ſharpeſt-ſighted are reeling and miſtaking their way, not being able to diſcern between ſin and duty in divers caſes. Alas! many are wandering and loſing their way. Surely then it is our wiſdom and duty to improve the light that remains, in ſeeking converting grace to ourſelves, and an aſſured intereſt in precious Chriſt, before the darkneſs of the night overtake us: and alſo to pray for pity to the land, that "at evening it may be light."

In the *laſt place*, Notwithſtanding of theſe diſmal

tokens, it makes the ſeaſon ſomewhat promiſing, that we hear of Chriſt's goings as a conqueror in other parts of the world, and many bowing down at his feet. Now if the King of Zion, be riſing up to make his circuit through his churches, to diſplay his glorious power and grace among them; may it not raiſe our hopes, and encourage us to look out for his marching towards us, to make good that word, Zech. xiv. 7. "It ſhall come to paſs that at evening time it ſhall be light:" that is, when it was not expected. And, oh! what a pleaſant ſurprize would this appearance be to all the lovers of Zion!

II. The *ſecond head* is to enquire who may be ſaid to have loſt their ſummer-days, or their likely ſeaſons of grace. Though we cannot be peremptory about any, while life remains, yet of ſome there may be ſad grounds of fear, that the text is too applicable to them, "Their harveſt is paſt, their ſummer is ended, and they are not ſaved;" ſuch as, 1. Thoſe who have had the Spirit long ſtriving with them, and they have reſiſted all his motions and operations, ſo that he is quite withdrawn from them. The caſe of ſuch is very hopeleſs, according to Ezek. xxiv. 13. 2. Thoſe who perſiſt in ſinful courſes, and harden their necks againſt all challenges and reproofs for the ſame, we ſee what is ſaid of them, Prov. xxix. 1. 3. Thoſe who come the length to ſin preſumptuouſly; that is, venture upon ſin againſt light, in hopes of repentance and pardon, their caſe is diſmal, according to Num. xv. 30. 4. Thoſe who provoke God, by their bentneſs on ſin, to ceaſe to be a reprover to them, to ſtrike both conſcience and miniſters dumb, that they may challenge them no more, Ezek. iii. 27. Hoſ. iv. 17 5. Thoſe who deliberately relapſe into ſin, after rods, convictions, reſolutions, and vows, Iſa. i. 5. 6. Thoſe who give themſelves up to commit ſin with greedineſs, and glory in it, Eph. iv. 19. Phil. iii. 19. 7. Thoſe who deſpiſe all goſpel-offers, and mock the meſſengers who bring them, 2 Chron. xxxvi 16. Alas! ſuch have reaſon to fear "their harveſt is paſt," &c. Their caſe is very hopeleſs, though none can ſay it is paſt the reach of ſovereign grace.

III. The

III. The *third head* is, to enquire into the cauſes of mens loſing their hopeful ſeaſons. 1. It proceeds from their unbelief and doubting of the certainty of goſpel-truths: This keeps many hovering ſo long between heaven and hell, death and life, Chriſt and the world, and their ſummer and harveſt-days are gone before they come to a reſolution. Did men believe the certainty of wrath to come, and that they are born heirs of that wrath, they would think no motion ſwift enough in fleeing to Chriſt, and cloſing with him in order to eſcape it.

2. Many trifle away their ſummer-days and ſeaſons of action, becauſe they look on death and eternity at many years diſtance, and that they will have time enough, before theſe expire, to mind ſalvation-work. By this deluſion, ſatan cheats many out of their moſt hopeful ſeaſons. Did men look on death as within a ſtep of them, and having no more but a ſingle thread to cut, ſo that within a few days they ſhall either be ſinging with the ſaints in heaven, or roaring with the damned in hell, they would not let their ſummer-days paſs ſo idly.

3. Promiſing ſummer days are loſt through indulging of ſloth. Many, before they will be at ſome pains now in prayer and ſecret duties, will venture upon endleſs pains in hell hereafter. Oh! prodigious folly! What pains was Chriſt at to ſave you, and will you be at none to ſave yourſelves? Hath not God an eternity of reſt and pleaſure to recompence your ſmall toil and pains in improving your ſummer-days?

4. Love of ſenſual delights and carnal company proves a ſnare to many. They are hereby drawn into idleneſs, games, paſtimes, tippling, fooliſh talking, and jeſting, and other ſinful pleaſures; whereby their ſummer-days are trifled away and miſ-ſpent. Even thoſe diverſions which are judged the moſt innocent, ought to be uſed with fear and caution, leſt they ſteal away our heart and thoughts from our chief concerns; which, if they do, they are not innocent but hurtful. O they are ſad diverſions that would divert us from Chriſt and heaven. It is unbecoming a Chriſtian that looks for eternal delights in another world, and pleaſures

of

for ever, and yet would be playing theſe away at cards and dice, or trifling them away in jeſts and diverſions, tippling and idleneſs, and never once minding the ſaving of his ſoul! And yet how many of all ranks may I apply to, and ſay, "Thou art the man!"

Infer. 5. If goſpel-ſeaſons be the ſummer and harveſt for our ſouls, it muſt be our unqueſtionable duty and intereſt to improve them with the greateſt care, by complying with the Spirit's motions, and the goſpel-offers, by cloſing with Chriſt, and "giving all diligence to make our calling and election ſure;" for, if the proper ſeaſon for theſe be loſt, the work cannot be done at all. You are all careful to obſerve the ſeaſons for your ſecular profits. The huſbandman his ſeaſon for plowing, ſowing, and reaping; the merchant his time for attending fairs and markets; the mariner his time when the wind is fair for ſailing. And ought not you much more to be obſervant of your ſummer and harveſt ſeaſons of grace? Remember and believe it, O trifler, the time is at hand, when you will be put to cry, "O for one of thoſe ſummer-days again! O for one of thoſe ſabbaths or communion-ſeaſons, wherein I had the offers of a crucified Chriſt! O how would I prize it; but alas! a thouſand worlds, had I them to give, cannot recal one of them to me." It was a vain wiſh of that poor woman when dying, O call time again, call time again. No, no, a ſummer-day or a harveſt-day cannot be recalled; therefore be wiſe to ſpend them with fear and care, while you enjoy them.

May the Lord bleſs goſpel-ſeaſons to us. Amen.

Of

Of a Public Spirit.

SERMON II.

On Jer viii. 21. *For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt, &c.*

THE doctrine which now falls to be handled, is,

Doct. II. That every gracious ſpirit is a public ſpirit, and will lay to heart the calamitous caſe of the church or country of which he is a member.

So did Jeremiah here, and in ſeveral other parts of his writings, as in Jer. ix. 1. Jer. xiii. 17. and in his book of Lamentations: Such public-ſpirited perſons alſo were Moſes, Samuel, David, Iſaiah, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Paul, and other ſcripture-ſaints.

The method of handling this doctrine may be,

I. To enquire into the nature and evidences of a truly public ſpirit.

II. To ſhew the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of a public ſpirit.

III. Make application.

I. As to the *firſt*, to wit, the nature of this public ſpirit which is in gracious perſons, eſpecially as it is evidenced by their holy zeal, and concern for the church under diſtreſs; it doth imply ſeveral things:

1. A ſincere love to Chriſt, and concern for his glory, which prompts us to prefer the things of Chriſt to our own things. If we love not Chriſt the head, we cannot have a true love to his body and church, nor a concern for its welfare. It is this love that makes gracious ſouls "prefer Jeruſalem above their chief joy," Pſal. cxxxvii. 6.

2. There is in it, a ſympathy and fellow-feeling with the church in diſtreſs, as being members of the ſame body. We ſee every living member of the body feels the injuries which are done to it, or to any of its fellow-members, and is ready to act for their relief: So the eyes and hands are ready to help the leg or foot when hurt, as feeling the ſmart of it. In like manner the members of Chriſt's body-myſtical have a fellow-feeling together, and are ready to act for the relief of each other in diſtreſs.

3. It imports not only a deep concern and ſorrow for the church in trouble, but alſo a diſpoſition to expreſs and evidence this concern, by uſing all the means in our power to help and relieve her; ſuch as *faſting, mourning, and weeping*, for all the ſins, whether of ourſelves or others, which draw down wrath and calamities upon the church; and wreſtling with God by earneſt prayer for her relief, looking to Chriſt and his blood for pardoning and removing thoſe ſins which have raiſed the ſtorm againſt her. Thus did Nehemiah, Daniel, Ezra, David, Jeremiah, and others.

II. The 2*d head*, is to ſhew the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of this public ſpirit, and zealous concern for the church in diſtreſs. Now this will appear from ſeveral grounds and conſiderations; ſuch as,

1. The near relation to, and intereſt which Chriſt hath in his church. The church is his building, his houſhold, his peculiar treaſure, his jewels, and dear purchaſe; yea, ſhe is Chriſt's body, of which he is the Head. Now, if you have any love to Chriſt himſelf, you cannot be unconcerned for the church, which is ſo nearly related to him, when ſhe is in trouble. If you love the Head, you cannot but love the body alſo. Again, as Chriſt's relation to the church is near, ſo his love to her is proportionable; he compares his love to that of a tender mother's to her ſucking child, which ſhe cannot forget: and therefore "he engraves Zion upon the palms of his hands, and hath her walls continually before him," Iſ. xlix. 15, 16. In that expreſſion, he alludes to the practice of the Jews in ſhewing their concern for Jeruſalem in ruins, during the Babyloniſh captivity: They

engraved

engraved the effigies of Jeruſalem upon their rings, to keep her in perpetual remembrance: In like manner, ſaith the Lord, I have the church engraven upon the palms of my hands, ſo that I can never open my hand to beſtow a bleſſing upon any, but the church's caſe preſents to my eye. Now, if God ſo loves the church, and is concerned for her welfare, it becomes us alſo to be concerned and affected for her.

2. This affectionate concern is reaſonable and neceſſary, becauſe it is your intereſt. Every one of you is nearly connected with that of the church, as being members of the ſame myſtical body, who muſt ſuffer one with another; ſo that in ſeeking the public good of the church, you conſult your own private intereſt alſo; for your own proſperity is bound up in her welfare. You are like paſſengers in a ſhip that have your perſons and all your effects along with you there; ſo that, if the ſhip be proſperous, you are well, but if ſhe ſink, you loſe all. Your precious ſouls in particular muſt ſuffer when the church doth ſuffer: They cannot but be reduced to a melancholy ſituation, when the church is diſtreſſed with ſpititual judgments; ſuch as the plague of dry breaſts, and the withdrawing of the Spirit of God from ordinances. If the mother be ſickly, the ſuckling child muſt languiſh.

3. To be public-ſpirited makes a man a public bleſſing, and an inſtrument of much good to others, which is a man's greateſt honour. This would make you reſemble your heavenly Father, who doth good to all, by making his ſun to riſe and his rain to fall upon them. And alſo like your Saviour, who was a public bleſſing, while on earth, for he ſtill "went about doing good," Acts x 38 And like Abraham, who was a "bleſſing to the nations," Gen. xii. 2. Job was a man of a noble public ſpirit, upon which account he was had in the greateſt love and eſteem, reſpect and reverence, by all ranks; when the ear heard him, or the eye ſaw him, they bleſſed him; why? becauſe (ſaith he) "I delivered the poor that cried, I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame," &c. Job xxix. 11, 12, &c.

4. Becauſe God's glory ſuffers when the church ſuffers, "for Zion is the ſeat of his glory," Pſ. lxxvi. 1, 2.

It is the church that doth diſplay and ſhew it forth. God's revenue of honour and praiſe in the world would come to little, if God had not a church therein to pay him his rent; hence he calls his church "the branch of my planting, the work of my hands that I may be glorified," Iſ. lx. 21. The reſt of the world embezzle their talents, but God's church and people improve theirs for God's glory. Now when theſe are ſuppreſſed and ſunk, they are diſabled for ſhewing forth his glory. Nay, then the enemy is ready to inſult them, and to reproach both them and their God. Hence king Hezekiah called the time of Jeruſalem's diſtreſs, "a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blaſphemy, Iſa. xxxvii. 3.

5. Becauſe God is highly pleaſed with a public ſpirit, and with thoſe who interpoſe for his church in trouble; he repreſents himſelf in ſcripture as ſeeking carefully for thoſe to put marks of honour and reſpect upon them, Jer. v. 1. Ezek. xxii. 30. Alſo we ſee what ſingular honour God put upon Moſes and Phineas upon that account, Exod. xxxii. 11, 14. Numb. xxv. 10. 11. Pſal. cvi. 23, 30, 31. Alſo he promiſes proſperity to all ſuch, and familiarity with himſelf, Pſal. cxxii. 6. Iſa. xlv. 11.

6. Becauſe, on the other hand, God is much diſpleaſed with thoſe who are unconcerned about his church when in diſtreſs, yea, he denounces a "woe againſt them who are at eaſe in Zion, and are not grieved for the affliction of Joſeph," Amos vi. 1. 6. And we ſee what wrath was threatened againſt Eſther, if ſhe ſhould be eaſy or ſilent when the church was in danger, Eſth. iv. 14. "For if thou altogether hold thy peace at this time, then ſhall enlargement and deliverance ariſe to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's houſe ſhall be deſtroyed."

THE APPLICATION.

Infer. 1. If God be well pleaſed with thoſe who are ſenſibly affected with the church's caſe when in diſtreſs, how flaming muſt his wrath be againſt thoſe who are the inſtruments

inſtruments of her diſtreſs, and, inſtead of ſympathizing with her in it, do rejoice in her trouble: O that ſuch would know, that they are not only the enemies of the church, but they are the enemies of God, and the very butt of his anger every day, Pſal. vii. 11. How dreadful is their caſe, who have the poiſoned arrows of God's wrath levelled againſt them!

Infer. 2. If it be the character of gracious ſouls to be concerned for the church, what a bad ſign muſt it be, of thoſe who mind their own things, and not the things of Jeſus Chriſt? of whom the apoſtle ſpeaks, Phil. ii. 21. And, alas! how many are there amongſt us, who have their minds and affections wholly ſet upon the earth! They are warm, keen, and anxious about the concerns of their bodies and families, but cold and indifferent about the things of Chriſt and his church: They, like Gallio, care for none of theſe things, Acts xviii. 17. If their bodies or friends be in diſtreſs, they are troubled; but though the church of God be in affliction, it gives them no uneaſineſs; which is a ſad ſign they are not living members of Jeſus Chriſt; for if they were, they would have a feeling and ſympathy with the body.

3. We may take up a lamentation for the want of a public-ſpirited and generous concern for the church of God among us, which is this day in great danger and diſtreſs by errors, diviſions, and decay of piety: And yet, how few are laying it to heart? Ah! whence doth this indifference proceed? Surely from want of love to Chriſt, the church's Head, or from exceſſive love to the world and carnal pleaſures. When men "lie upon beds of ivory, chant to the ſound of the viol, and drink wine in bowls, they are not grieved for the affliction of Joſeph," Amos vi. 4, 5, 6. Again, this indifferency about Chriſt's matters, proceeds from that curſed root of ſelf-love, and ſelf-ſeeking, which is in all men by nature; though, in the mean time, ſin and ſatan have blinded their eyes, that they know not their true intereſt: They know not what it is rightly to ſeek themſelves; if they ſeek the good of their bodies with the neglect of their ſouls, they think to ſeek themſelves beſt

beſt this way: But O if their eyes were opened, they would ſee that this ſelf-ſeeking is nothing but ſelf-hating and ſelf deſtroying. The rich glutton fancied he was ſeeking himſelf and his own happineſs, when he cloathed himſelf in purple and fared deliciouſly every day; but afterwards, when he lifted up his eyes, he ſaw his ſelf ſeeking was really ſelf deſtroying; for by pampering his body a little time, he damned his ſoul for ever. So that thoſe who ſerve God beſt, by ſeeking his glory and his church's good, before their worldly intereſt, do really ſeek themſelves moſt; for they hereby ſecure the happineſs of both ſoul and body through all eternity.

4. It may be needful here to give ſome caution againſt the wrong uſe of this doctrine, which ſome may be in hazard to make, by ſpending their zeal and concern about the public caſe of the church to the neglect of their own perſonal caſe. O ſirs, beware of this extreme, and ſuſpect this zeal not to be of the right ſort; for where there is a ſincere regard to God's glory, it will ſhew itſelf, in the firſt place, in ſeeking to have matters right at home, to have your own ſouls caſe put in good order, to have a true faith in Chriſt, the nature renewed, and corruptions ſubdued, without which you can never glorify God, or do any thing to pleaſe him: Likewiſe, it will ſhew itſelf in eſteeming and preferring the great and eſſential truths of the goſpel, and deſiring to hear of the excellency and uſefulneſs of a crucified Jeſus, and of the Holy Spirit's dealing with ſouls in beginning and carrying on a work of grace. Now when theſe ſweet truths are not ſo much reliſhed, as to hear reflections and cenſures upon the management of public affairs, you have ground to be jealous that your deceitful hearts are carrying you to an extreme, and to a zeal for the church, which is not right. True zeal for God will make you careful to be acquainted with your own hearts, to have matters right in the firſt place between God and your own ſouls, to have humility, truth and ſincerity in the inward parts, without which God will not dwell, nor hold communion with you, nor can you claim God's promiſes of guiding

guiding and direction in dark and dividing times; for it is not the proud or self-conceited Christian that hath the promise, but the humble and self-denied, Psal. xxv. 9. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Study always then to be meek and humble, and, in order thereto to be acquainted with your own deceitful hearts, which will be fair to deceive you, if you be not on your guard. Watch then, and let never your concern for the public draw you off from private duties, nor from secret and heart-work; for some may make very splendid appearance for public things, and yet prove nothing at last but cast aways, for want of personal godliness. But by telling you this, let none think I encourage any to turn Gallios, with respect to the matters of God, and the interest and welfare of his church, as, alas! the generality are; no, I teach and press the contrary.

5. Let all, therefore, be exhorted to be public spirited, and suitably concerned for the church in distress. O lay to heart her calamity, and shew your concern for her relief, by mourning for sin which brings on wrath, and praying earnestly for deliverance from it, saying, with David, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem."

Motives to it: 1. From the pattern of our blessed Lord and Head, whose example we should copy after in his sympathy with, and concern for the church in trouble. "His soul was grieved for their misery: In all their afflictions he was afflicted." When they are persecuted he feels himself injured, and this sympathy sets him on work to intercede for them, as he did for Jerusalem under the Babylonish captivity, Zech. i. 12. "O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years." Let all the members then follow the example of their Head.

2. Public-spirited persons are the pillars of societies, and bear off wrath and judgments from them. Hence we see the flood could not rise to destroy the old world till Noah was shut up in the ark; nor could the fire be

raised

rained from heaven upon Sodom, till Lot was houſed in Zoar; and both Noah and Lot were public-ſpirited men, and therefore great bleſſings and pillars to the world. O ſirs, this public-ſpirited diſpoſition would make you bleſſings to the church and to the iſland: It would make you live deſired, and die lamented. Men would reckon your lives worthy of many prayers, and your deaths of many tears. Elijah was of this diſpoſition, and we ſee how Eliſha bewailed his departure, 2 Kings ii. 12. "And Eliſha ſaw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Iſrael, and the horſemen thereof:" meaning that Elijah was the ſafety and ſtrength of Iſrael, by his prevalency with God; and a better defence to them than chariots and horſemen.

3. This diſpoſition is a good evidence both of love to God, and of love to the ſouls of men: for it is of the nature of true love to be concerned for the good of thoſe whom we love, to mourn when they ſuffer, and rejoice when they proſper. If we love God, we will lament the diſhonours which are done to him. If we love the ſouls of men, we will pray for their converſion, and bewail their ſins which bring deſtruction upon them.

4. It would be a good means to ſave you from the guilt of other mens ſins, and ſecure you from the wrath which they bring on. For they who ſigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midſt of Jeruſalem, have a mark ſet upon them for their preſervation, Ezek. ix. 4. God looks upon our mourning for the ſins of others, as an entering of our diſſent againſt them, and ſo will not charge them upon us.

Queſt. How ſhall we attain to this public-ſpirit and zealous concern for the church in diſtreſs?

Anſ Take the following directions:

1. Beg for the Spirit of God that dwells, breathes, and acts in all the members of Chriſt's myſtical body. He ſurely is the public Spirit that inclines all the members to take the ſame care one for another, and to ſeek the good of the whole body, Rom. viii. 14.

2. Let the grace of love abound in your hearts, love to God and to all his people; and ſee to keep this ho-

ly

ly fire always burning. Love makes the wants and ſufferings of others to be our own, and prompts us to lay out ourſelves for them.

3. Love the ſociety of the public-ſpirited and zealous ones of the land, and particularly thoſe who ſtudy to manage their zeal with piety and prudence; for as iron ſharpens iron, ſo the converſation of ſuch may be the means of enlivening you.

4. Beware of carnal company, which oft proves a dangerous quench-coal to zeal and activity for God. Peter found this by going into the ſociety of the high-prieſt's ſervants; for though he got his hands warmed amongſt them, he got his heart miſerably cooled to Chriſt and his people.

5. When you attain to any meaſure of zeal and public-ſpiritedneſs, endeavour to manage it with holy wiſdom and caution, ſo as you may recommend this grace to others, and not ſtumble them at it through your miſmanagement. There is much need for this caution, eſpecially in reeling and dividing times; wherefore take theſe advices:

1. See that you act from a principle of true love to God, which will engage you to love all who bear his ſtamp and image.

2. See that your ends be pure and ſincere, not to gain eſteem or applauſe, or increaſe a party; but that God may be glorified, and Chriſt's kingdom advanced in the world.

3. Watch carefully that your zeal do not mix itſelf with your own paſſion and bitterneſs of ſpirit, which we are always in hazard of: The apoſtle James doth nobly caution us againſt this evil, Jam. iii. 14. to the end. A cauſe ſometimes may be good and juſt, and yet managed with too much heat and animoſity againſt our godly brethren: Job's friends were good men, and expreſſed much zeal for God and religion in their ſpeeches, but yet God was diſpleaſed with them for mixing their zeal with ſo much bitterneſs and raſh cenſures againſt his upright ſervant Job. Wherefore if conſcience oblige you at any time to oppoſe them who are godly, ſee that you do it with much calmneſs, tenderneſs and cau-

tion; and take care that your zeal do not degenerate into paſſion, bitterneſs, or hatred againſt any of them. Mind what the centurion ſaid to the chief captain, when going to ſcourge Paul, Acts xxii 26. "Take heed what thou doſt, for this man is a Roman." So ſay I, take heed what you do to any man, that is a member of Chriſt.

Object. Are we not called to contend with earneſtneſs when matters of faith are at the ſtake? according to Jude, ver. 2. *Anſ.* 1. All points of truth are not of equal weight and importance, and therefore not to be contended for with equal zeal and concern. 2. Zeal and meekneſs are very conſiſtent, and not oppoſite; ſo that there may be zealous and earneſt contending for truth without wrath and paſſion. 3. Be perſuaded that the wrath of man never worketh the righteouſneſs of God; yea, wrath and paſſion is the worſt thing that can be brought into a religious controverſy, for as a bad cauſe is never made better, ſo a good cauſe is always made worſe by it. The glory of God doth not need ſuch rotten pillars to ſupport it, as our wrath and paſſion, or our bitter and angry words. Alas! it is the raſh uſing of the tongue that greatly influences our differences, namely, by perſonal reflections, rigid cenſures, uncharitable conſtructions, evil ſurmiſes, aggravating the miſtakes of others, &c. This the wiſe man obſerved of old, Prov. xv. 1. 18. Surely the tongue is an unruly member, and full of deadly poiſon. May God, of his infinite mercy, give us grace to govern it aright, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. Amen.

The

The Diſeaſes of Souls.

SERMON III.

On Jer. viii. 22. *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no phyſician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?*

THE words being before explained, and the doctrines raiſed, I proceed to

Doct. III. viz. However deſperate the diſeaſes of thoſe within the church may ſeem to be, yet if they die of them, it will be owing to themſelves, ſeeing they have an able phyſician, and excellent balm to look to for healing.

This being the doctrine which I chiefly intended to inſiſt upon, I propoſe to do it at ſome length in the following method:

I. I will enquire into thoſe dangerous diſeaſes for which there is balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there.

II. Take notice of ſome of thoſe dangerous ſymptoms which make our diſeaſes appear deſperate and incurable, for which there is yet balm in Gilead.

III. Speak of the phyſician there, who hath the balm, and applies it for curing the diſeaſed.

IV. Enquire into the nature of the balm, and means which the phyſician makes uſe of for healing.

V. Touch at the phyſician's method of applying the balm, and performing the cure.

VI. Make application of the whole.

I. The *firſt head*, is to enquire into the dangerous diſeaſes of thoſe within the church for which the balm is provided. And for the better underſtanding hereof I ſhall premiſe ſome things.

1. When I ſpeak of the church, I mean the church viſible, which includes hypocrites as well as true believers.

2. Though the ſtrength and power of the ſoul's diſeaſes be broken in believers, by renewing grace, yet there is no diſeaſe in the unrenewed, but believers are in part liable to it, and have the relicks of it to groan under, while they are here below.

3. I am not to ſpeak of the diſeaſes of the body natural, which is the province of phyſicians; nor of the body-politic, or civil ſociety, which is the buſineſs of politicians and ſtateſmen: though in the mean time the abounding of theſe at this day is ſo viſible to all, that we have ground to bewail and mourn over them before the Lord. Ah! the diſeaſes of our body, both civil and eccleſiaſtic, are ſo great and lamentable, that we may juſtly apply that word to ourſelves, which we have in Iſa. i. 5. 6. "The whole head is ſick, and the whole heart faint; from the ſole of the foot even unto the head, there is no ſoundneſs in it, but wounds, bruiſes, and putrifying ſores." Such a caſe indeed is mournful, yet, bleſſed be God, it is not deſperate: There is balm in Gilead for the ſtate as well as the church, and we ſhould plead with the great phyſician in Iſrael to pity both, and heal their reſpective diſeaſes. Thanks be to God that he is both able and willing, and that he gives us ſuch promiſes to plead with him, as theſe following, in Iſa. i. 25. 26. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy droſs, and take away thy ſin: And I will reſtore thy judges as at the firſt, and thy counſellors as at the beginning; afterwards thou ſhalt be called the city of righteouſneſs," &c. And that in Iſa. xlix. 22. 23. "Thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and ſet up my ſtandard to the people; and they ſhall bring thy ſons in their arms, and thy daughters ſhall be carried on their ſhoulders; and kings ſhall be thy

thy nurſing fathers, and their queens thy nurſing mothers," &c. And that promiſe in Iſaiah lx. 17. 18. "I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteouſneſs; violence ſhall no more be heard in thy land, waſting nor deſtruction within thy borders; but thou ſhalt call thy walls ſalvation, and thy gates praiſe." Now, it is ſurely the duty of all the members of both church and ſtate, to plead theſe promiſes with God, and to wait his time for accompliſhing them to us. O what is there ſo hard, but the out pouring of his Spirit can do?

4. The diſeaſes which I propoſe to ſpeak of in this place are the ſins of ſpiritual plagues and diſtempers of mens ſouls, which are very dangerous and deadly: Theſe we ought all to know, with their ſymptoms and effects, that we may ſeek after the balm in Gilead, which is mercifully provided of God for our healing. God would have every man to know the plague of his own heart, 1 Kings viii. 38. This every man ſhould know and be acquainted with in the firſt place, in order to healing; though yet we are not wholly to confine our thoughts and care about thoſe diſeaſes which are private and perſonal, but ſhew our concern alſo about thoſe which are public and national; of which more afterwards.

5. Theſe ſoul diſtempers are called, in ſcripture, diſeaſes, wounds, and ſickneſs; Pſal. xxxviii. 5. and ciii. 3. and cxlvii. 3. Ezek. xxxiv. 4 Matth. ix. 12. becauſe they produce effects in the ſoul, like to thoſe which diſeaſes produce in the body; ſuch as, 1. As diſeaſes waſte the beauty of the body, and produce uncomelineſs and deformity in it, Pſ. xxxix. 11. As they make the eyes ſink and turn dull, the ſkin ſhrink up and gather blackneſs, the fleſh melt away, and bones ſtick out, and the moſt beautiful perſon to look pale and ghaſtly; So our ſins and ſpiritual diſtempers deſtroy the comelineſs of the ſoul, deprive it of its primitive beauty, the image of God; and bring upon it a moſt ghaſtly deformity, and make it reſemble both brutes and devils, the one in ſenſuality and luſt, the other in pride and malice. 2. As diſeaſes weaken the body,

and

and make it unfit for ſpiritual work and exerciſes, as prayer, hearing, meditating, &c. ſo that duty becomes a burden to it. 3. As the diſeaſes deprive men of their appetite for food, and of their digeſtion; ſo ſin takes away the ſoul's appetite and digeſtion, that it hath no hunger for the bread of life, for communion with God, and the influences of his Spirit; and though the man attends ordinances, he doth not digeſt what he hears, nor is nouriſhed by it. 4. Diſeaſes occaſion pain in the body that it cannot reſt; ſo ſin brings anguiſh and torture into the ſoul. Hence David complains of his bones being vexed, and his ſoul being ſore vexed, Pſal. vi. 2. 3. Theſe things being premiſed, I ſhall mention ſome of thoſe dangerous diſeaſes of the ſoul, for which we need the balm in Gilead.

I. *Atheiſm.* Infidelity or miſbelief of divine truths revealed to us, is a deadly diſeaſe, for it hinders the ſucceſs of the goſpel, and the ſaving of ſouls. What is it that keeps many halting ſo long between two opinions, and hovering betwixt Chriſt and the devil, but their not believing firmly the Bible to be God's word, and the goſpel tidings to be certain truth; namely, that God ſent Jeſus Chriſt, his eternal Son, into the world, to aſſume our nature, and die for ſin in our ſtead; and their not giving firm credit to the being of a God, the immortality of the ſoul, and the life to come. Tho' many will not openly queſtion any of theſe truths, yet the wavering thoughts they have about them, hinder them from falling in with the goſpel-method of ſalvation, which God hath eſtabliſhed. Ah! this is a deadly diſeaſe! Alſo, there is much practical Atheiſm among us; many profeſs to own God, and yet live as if they believed there was no God that made the world, and no providence that governs it: They pay God no homage nor reſpect; they put the creature, or ſelf in God's room; they aſcribe their mercies to fortune, or to their own wiſdom or induſtry, rather than to God. A woful diſeaſe! God's children indeed are cured of prevailing Atheiſm, yet the dregs of the diſeaſe do remain;

main; and ſometimes atheiſtical thoughts come to a great height in them, as is Aſaph, though afterwards he was heartily grieved and aſhamed for entertaining them, and calls himſelf both a fool and a beaſt for it, Pſal. lxxiii. 21. 22. And no wonder he did ſo, for Atheiſm and infidelity, though it abound in the church, yet there is no ſuch diſeaſe in hell, no ſuch madneſs there, for the devils believe and tremble, James ii. 19. But though the diſeaſe be grievous, yet Chriſt hath balm for it, and to him we muſt go both to help our unbelief, and increaſe our faith.

II. *Ignorance of God* and of goſpel truths is a mortal diſeaſe, and deſtroys many, even of thoſe who profeſs to know him, according to Hoſ. iv. 6. There are multitudes living in the midſt of goſpel light, who yet continue in groſs darkneſs. They are ignorant of the infinite juſtice and holy nature of God; and of the miſery of man in his fallen eſtate, of the evil of ſin, and the ranſom neceſſary for it. They are ignorant of Jeſus Chriſt and his mediatory offices, and of the nature and neceſſity of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and of faith which applies it to us. They know nothing of the Spirit's office in our redemption, nor of his work in regeneration; yea, they do not ſo much as know if there be a Holy Ghoſt. Alas! that this diſeaſe of ignorance ſhould ſtill prevail, notwithſtanding all the means of knowledge we enjoy. I grant believers are ſpiritually illuminated, and get the ſtrength of this diſeaſe broken at their firſt converſion, yet ſtill much blindneſs doth remain with them; and frequently clouds of darkneſs do ſo overſhadow them, that they have but faint views of divine myſteries. This is a ſad diſeaſe, but yet there is balm in Gilead, and eye ſalve in Iſrael for it, Rev. iii 17. 18. Jer. xxiv. 7.

III. *Hardneſs of heart* is a ruining diſeaſe to multitudes. Oh! it is this that makes them ſit under the miniſtry of the word, and hear the moſt terrible threatenings and curſes denounced againſt their ſins, and yet be no more moved than the ſeats they ſit on, or the dead that lie under their feet; ſo hard is the ſtone in the heart, that the hammer of the word in the hand of

of man makes no impreſſion upon it; promiſes draw not, and threatenings drive not; mercies do not allure, and judgments do not alarm; this is a prevailing plague among the generality of goſpel-hearers. And though believers at converſion have the heart of ſtone taken away, and a heart of fleſh given, yet they are much plagued with recurring hardneſs, that oft makes them complain of being little affected either with ordinances or providences; and though the fire burn round about them, that they lay it not to heart. This is an evil diſeaſe, yet there is balm in Iſrael, and help in the promiſes for it, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Pſal. i. 6.

IV. *Earthly-mindedneſs* is a woful diſeaſe; it clogs the mind and unfits the ſoul for ſpiritual work. The thoughts of the world ſhut out the thoughts of God and eternity; they tempt many poor ſouls, like Martha, to be carefully troubled about many things, even things which will not avail them at a dying hour, while the one thing neceſſary is quite neglected and forgot. Ah! what numbers are there dying of this diſeaſe? when other plagues kill their thouſands, this ſlays its ten thouſands. O what havock doth it daily make among profeſſed Chriſtians? Pharaoh's words concerning the Iſraelites,, may well be applied to many of them, Exod. xiv. 3. "They are entangled in the land, the wilderneſs hath ſhut them in." So hot are they in purſuing the world, ſo buſied in providing for their families, in paying their debts, in making bargains, purchaſes, and in courting the favour of men, that they can find no time in their lives, nor room in their hearts for precious Chriſt, and the concerns of their ſouls. O ſinners! this diſeaſe of *earthly-mindedneſs* doth quite defeat the deſign of the goſpel, and marr your profiting by ſabbaths and ſermons; it turns the houſe of God into a place of merchandize, by your thoughtfulneſs in it about worldly gain and profit. What a fearful diſtemper is this, that turns a man's head and heart where his feet ſhould be! that makes him beſtow his ſoul and all its noble faculties upon a little white and yellow clay! and ſo all his days dig for droſs and dung with mattocks of gold! Nothing can cure this diſeaſe but

but the balm of Gilead: The prevailing power of it is indeed broken in believers at converſion, the world is then put down from the throne and chief place in the ſoul; yet afterwards it doth rally its broken forces, and ſtruggles hard to recover the throne again; and this proves very troubleſome even to the beſt. It diſtracts their thoughts, moleſts them in holy duties, and ſteals away their affections from Chriſt and heaven. This is a ſore plague, yet there is balm in Iſrael and help in God's word and promiſe for it; Cant. iv. 8. Jer. xxxii. 4. Col. iii. 1. 2.

V. *Averſion to ſpiritual duties* is a ſore diſeaſe, when the heart becomes backward to pay God a viſit in ſecret, and the man unwilling to go to his cloſet to converſe with his Maker. Ah! this is the caſe with many, who would rather toil their bodies a whole day, than ſpend a quarter of an hour upon their knees with God in ſecret. Their animal ſpirits are vigorous and lively in purſuing their worldly buſineſs, or even their diverſions; but they are low and faint in ſoul-work and ſpiritual exerciſes. We ſee many, they do not weary to ſpend whole days, yea, and nights too, in drinking, dancing, gaming, and ſerving their luſts; but they grudge to give God ſo much as one day, or any part even of his own day. They ſay of Sabbaths and ſermons, "What a wearineſs hath it? When will the ſabbath be gone?" This is a prevailing diſeaſe, and how ſtrong are the dregs of it even in believers! For tho' at converſion their hearts are reconciled to God and his ways, yet at times they feel much of a recurring backwardneſs for ſpiritual work, ſo that when they would do good, evil is preſent with them. But yet there is balm for this diſeaſe, in the phyſician of Iſrael, and his gracious promiſes, Pſal. cx. 3. Iſa. xl. 31. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

VI. *Indwelling corruption*, prevailing and venting itſelf various ways, is a ſad diſeaſe. Sometimes it riſes like a flood, ſwells high, and carries all before it, like the current of a tide that cannot be withſtood. So it is with thoſe in whom the ſtrength of corruption was never ſubdued by converting grace. And tho' the tide be turned with renewed perſons, yet upon ſome occa-

ſions we find them making great complaints of the prevalency of indwelling ſin, through the power of temptation, as Paul, Rom. vii. and David, Pſal. lxv. "Iniquities prevail againſt me;" and, Iſa. lxiv. 6. "Our iniquities like the wind have taken us away." This is a moſt humbling diſeaſe; yet the phyſician of Iſrael hath provided balm for it in his word, Pſ. lxv. 3. Mic. vii. 19. Rom. vii. 24. 25.

VII. *Hypocriſy and formality in God's ſervice* is a woful diſeaſe. When men draw near to God with their lips only, and give him no more but bodily ſervice, which is no better than that of a ſtatue on a tomb, with eyes and hands lift up, only it wants a voice. And how unpleaſant is a voice to God without the heart and affections? He heavily complains of it, Iſa. xxix. 13. Among the unrenewed, hypocriſy is a deadly and reigning diſeaſe. And though the converted be delivered from its reigning power, yet they are ſadly diſtreſſed with its remains, and oft put to complain that they give God more of the body, than of the heart in duty; and that their prayers are little better than lip-labour. But the phyſician of Iſrael hath promiſed balm for this diſeaſe, Jer. xxxi. 33. Prov. iv. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 16.

VIII. *Inconſtancy and wandering of heart in duty* is a prevailing diſeaſe. Alas! for the unfixedneſs of the heart, that goeth out in many vain excurſions towards the world and its trifles, and even in time of the moſt ſolemn approaches unto God! Hereby our religious performances are wofully marred, and God provoked to loath and abhor them. There is a voluntary and habitual wandering of heart, that is the reigning plague of the unregenerate: and there is an unvoluntary wandering, that is the diſeaſe of God's people, which they bemoan and lament before the Lord. But there is balm in Gilead for it in all ſhapes; Jer. xxxii. 29. Ezek. xi. 19.

IX. *Backſlidings from the Lord*, or a *ſpiritual conſumption*, is the common diſeaſe of God's people. They are liable to backſlide from the power and life of godlineſs, and to loſe their former ſpirituality and liveli-

neſs

neſs in ſerving God in their cloſets, families, and public aſſemblies; ſo that ſometimes, their religious duties are like to wither and dwindle away into a dead form, and "the things that remain are ready to die," as it was with the church of Sardis, Rev. iii. 2. This decay comes upon them when known ſin or ſloth are indulged by them. Then it is that ſpiritual exerciſes become a wearineſs, and averſion grows to heart-work and ſecret duties, ſuch as prayer, reading the Bible, meditation, and communing with their own hearts: Then the graces do languiſh, the faith of divine revelation becomes weak, the truths which God reveals concerning his glorious perfections, the excellencies of Chriſt, and concerning ſin and duty, heaven and hell, make but ſmall impreſſion on the mind. The repentance is reſtrained, and the ſoul is little affected with God and its evil; then love turns cool to Chriſt and his image, it doth not conſtrain to duty, nor to hate and mortify ſin as before; then hope becomes faint and languid, and hath not ſuch deſirous expectations of the eternal world, and things unſeen, as to fortify the ſoul againſt the allurements of the devil, the world, and the fleſh. This ſpiritual conſumption is a mournful diſeaſe, and calls us ſpeedily to apply to the phyſician of Iſrael for the balm he hath promiſed for it, Deut. xxx. 6. Hoſ. xiv. 4. 5. 6. Pſal. lxix. 32. John xiv. 19. Gal. ii. 20.

X. *Diſcouragement and down-caſting of ſoul* is one of God's people's diſeaſes that requires this balm. They are often caſt down by outward afflictions, and eſpecially by the prevalency of ſin and ſatan's temptations, by the hidings of God's face, the ſhutting out of their prayers, the darkening of their evidences, the revival of former guilt, and the renewing of mount Sinai's thunderings againſt them. Under theſe trials, they are apt to think that God holds them for his enemies, and writes bitter things againſt them, and hence are put to cry with the Pſalmiſt, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? And will he be favourable no more?" This is a diſeaſe which ſadly enfeebles their hearts and weakens their hands; yet the great Phyſician of the church hath provided balm for

it, Pſal. xlii. 5. &c. Iſa. xli. 10. 17. 18. and liv. 7. &c. Iſa. lvii. 16. &c. Jer. xxxi. 25. Heb. xiii. 5. 6.

XI. *Ingratitude to God for mercies* is a common diſeaſe. Alas! we turn unthankful both for common and ſpecial mercies, and for the unſpeakable gift of Jeſus Chriſt to Adam's fallen race: What bad requitals do we make to God for his goodneſs? There are many who make uſe of God's mercies as darts to ſhoot at heaven, and weapons to fight againſt God himſelf. The more he gives them of health and money, they turn the more profane and debauched; ſo that inſtead of ſerving God with his benefits, they make a ſacrifice of them to the devil, Hoſ. ii. 8. I fear ſuch will be found guilty of this evil, who beſtow their time and money upon games and paſtimes, balls and aſſemblies, plays and comedies, and ſuch vanities that prove nurſeries of ſin, and ſerve greatly to debauch the minds and morals of men and women. O let us not ungratefully requite the Lord our gracious benefactor. Ah! how much of this diſeaſe doth remain even with the beſt? Even Hezekiah rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. Great need have we all of the balm of Gilead to cure us of this plague.

XII. *Truſting to our own righteousness* is a diſeaſe which all are liable to. The unbeliever goes about to build an imaginary tower of his own righteouſneſs, and will not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt the glorious Surety, who hath brought in an everlaſting and law-biding righteouſneſs for ſinners to fly to. Nay, believers who have actually fled to it, do ſtill groan under the remains of this woful diſeaſe within them. They have ſtill a hankering after ſome dependence upon their duties and performances, altho' they cannot but own that their beſt duties need the blood of Chriſt, as well as their worſt ſins; and if they be not waſhen from the ſins that cleave to them, they would damn them. O! then, what need have we all of the balm in Gilead, and the Phyſician there, for theſe deadly diſeaſes which cleave to us?

Time

Time would fail me to mention and inſiſt upon many other grievous diſeaſes which abound among us, ſuch as pride, ſelf-conceit, and lifting up of ourſelves, becauſe of ſome attainments, above others; diſcontentment with our lot and condition in the world; impatience under croſſes, ſinful ſelf-love, intemperance, covetouſneſs, envy, raſh anger, malice, revenge, and many other deadly plagues. However light ſome may make of theſe diſtempers, yet there is none of them but what will prove deadly, if the balm of Gilead, and Phyſician there, be not applied to for cure. But, bleſſed be the God of Iſrael, that this balm is an univerſal medicine, a catholicon for all manner of ſoul diſeaſes, if ſinners would but ſeek to it, and ſubmit to the application of it in the Phyſician's own way. May we all be brought to ſee and feel our diſeaſes in time, that we may haſten to the great Phyſician of the church, while his balm and power are preſent to heal us. May God of his infinite mercy determine us to it, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. Amen.

SERMON IV.

On Jerem. viii. 22. *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no phyſician there,* &c.

IN the preceding ſermon I mentioned many ſoul-diſeaſes, which are more ſecret and inviſible, prevailing among us: In this I ſhall ſpeak of ſome other diſeaſes of a more public nature, which affect not only the particular members, but, in ſome reſpects, threaten the whole body of the church, and the ſeveral congregations thereof; and upon which account our poor diſeaſed church and land do greatly need the balm of Gilead, and phyſician there, at this day.

1. *Hereſy and error* is a diſeaſe which ſpreads like a gangrene, and doth very much threaten our church and

and land at this day; when doctrines are vented, and books diſperſed in favour of Deiſm, Socinianiſm, Arianiſm, Arminianiſm, and other errors: When principles are eſpouſed and ſpread, which tend to weaken divine revelation; to advance corrupt reaſon and ſelf-love as the ſpring and ſtandard of religion; to exalt our moral performances more than imputed righteouſneſs; to reproach the operations of the holy Spirit upon ſouls, with enthuſiaſm; and aſcribe our good actions more to the power of corrupt nature, than to efficacious free grace. Now, when ſuch errors as theſe, beſides many Popiſh tenets and ſuperſtitions, are propagated among us, there is ground to ſay, we have a ſick and diſeaſed land, that needs balm.

II. *Schiſm and diviſion* among the miniſters and members of the church is a grievous malady that we at preſent labour under. Surely it is a moſt unnatural diſtemper that cauſes the ſheep of Chriſt to bite and devour one another, and the members of Chriſt to ſeparate as aliens; yea, not only break up Chriſtian communion, but break out in uncharitable reflections, bitterneſs, wrath, clamour, and evil-ſpeaking, one againſt another. A ſtrange diſtemper! that puts thoſe who will delightfully worſhip God together through a whole eternity, in ſuch a caſe, that they cannot keep fellowſhip together here! A diſtemper, that makes men renounce communion with thoſe they once delighted in, and with whom the glorious Head doth ſtill hold communion; that takes many off from the vitals and eſſentials of religion, and employs their time in public controverſies about party opinions, the grounds of ſeparation, the characters of preachers, and things which rather tend to beget alienation of affections, and angry quarrels, than to promote ſaving knowledge, faith, love, and godly edifying. Oh! how wrath-like a judgment is that ſpirit of ſtrife and diviſion which God hath poured out upon this land for our former miſimprovement of the goſpel, and contempt of glorious Chriſt! Ah, what a flood-gate doth it open to many evils and calamities! That is a true word of the apoſtle James iii. 16. "Where envying and ſtrife is, there is confuſion and every

every evil work." What a plague muſt that be that produces every evil work? What a ſad diſeaſe is it, that turns Chriſtian converſe into vain janglings, that hinders ſocial prayers, that mars the ſucceſs of the goſpel, weakens the intereſt of religion, propagates all kind of evil, and expoſes the church to the ſcorn and deriſion of her enemies! How applicable is that word to us, Lam. ii. 13. "Thy breach is great like the ſea, who can heal thee?" Surely none but he that hath the balm of Gilead.

III. *Giddineſs and unſettledneſs in religion* is a diſeaſe that ſadly prevails among us. Many are now "reeling to and fro like drunken men, as the prophet ſpeaks, Iſa. xxiv. 20. They do not, like ſober men, keep the highway in a ſtraight courſe; but, like drunkards, ſtagger and reel from one ſide of the way to another. Alas, the moſt part are reeling either to one extreme or another, and very few are going on in a ſtraight and ſteady courſe. Many are reeling towards defection from our reformation principles and attainments which our worthy anceſtors valiantly contended and ſuffered for; particularly in encouraging and drawing on the yoke of patronage upon the church without neceſſity. Yea, pleading for it as lawful and harmleſs, though our reformers declared it to be contrary to the word of God, and the practice of the apoſtolical and primitive church. Likewiſe, in compliance with that yoke, many are voluntarily falling in with courſes for wreathing it upon the church's neck, and departing from ſeveral parts of our eſtabliſhed government and diſcipline to which they ſtand ſolemnly engaged, ſuch as our approved rules and practice with reſpect to the moderation of calls, the election and ordination of paſtors; and, in conſequence thereof, obtruding miniſters into congregations againſt their will, whereby the church is ſpoiled of her right of calling her own paſtors, the flock of Chriſt is ſcattered, the edification of ſouls hindered, the great ends of a goſpel-miniſtry defeated, and the work of the goſpel greatly obſtructed. Many alſo are ſwerving from our old covenant-engagements, and openly denying the lawfulneſs of national-covenanting, and the binding

binding obligation thereof upon poſterity; and forming to themſelves ſchemes of government which would open a door to anarchy and licentiouſneſs. Again, many are reeling towards Eraſtianiſm, and injurious infringements upon the church's intrinſic power, and upon Chriſt's immediate headſhip and ſupremacy over her, falling in with acts and practices which tend to take the keys of church power and government out of the hands of Chriſt and church officers of his appointment, and put them into the hands of the magiſtrate. Alſo, many are reeling from the ancient uſe of creeds and confeſſions of faith, towards a boundleſs toleration of all ſorts of errors and hereſies, aſſerting that neither the church nor the magiſtrate have any power to reſtrain them. Many are reeling towards the exalting of *ſelf*, even putting it in the room of God, ſaying it is in the power of a man's free will and natural abilities to repent and convert himſelf, and that there is a neceſſary connexion between a man's moral ſerioufneſs and his obtaining of ſaving grace. Yea, many are warping towards popery and old ſuperſtitions, pleading for a middle ſtate, for prayers for the dead, and for the Euchariſt's being a proper ſacrifice for ſin: for the neceſſity of a prieſt's abſolution in order to the forgiveneſs of ſin, and of bowing to the altar, and at the name of Jeſus; of obſerving uninſtituted feſtivals, of uſing the croſs in baptiſm, kneeling at the ſacrament, the organ in praiſe, and other inventions of men in God's worſhip. Nay, many are reeling from the very fundamentals of Chriſtianity, and the doctrine of the glorious trinity, Chriſt's deity and ſatisfaction, the neceſſity of ſupernatural revelation, and of the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and the operations of the holy Spirit; and, inſtead of theſe precious doctrines, offering the ſufficiency of reaſon, or nature's light, to conduct men in the way to happineſs. And theſe Socinian and Deiſtical tenets are not a little encouraged by the preachers of a rational or natural religion; I mean thoſe dry moral preachers, who are more earneſt in recommending a ſort of Pagan morality to the world, than in ſhewing the excellency and uſefulneſs of Chriſt for periſhing ſinners,

ners, and the nature and neceſſity of the work of his Spirit in applying his purchaſe, and of goſpel-holineſs to make them meet for heaven: who prefer a good ſaying, or moral precept, in ſome ancient philoſopher, to the counſels of Jeſus Chriſt, or the dictates of his apoſtles; vainly oppoſing the dim candle of man's reaſon to the ſun-ſhine of goſpel light diſplayed in the holy ſcriptures. All which do ſhew how ſadly the diſtemper of giddineſs and unſettledneſs in religion prevails in our land, and how greatly we need the balm of Gilead to cure us of it. If it ſhould be aſked, what is it that makes the land reel ſo? We have the anſwer in the forecited text, Iſa. xxiv. 20. "Becauſe the tranſgreſſion thereof is heavy upon it;" both the tranſgreſſions of the former and preſent age. Alas, there are many old ſins little minded by us! old perjuries and treacherous dealings with God; old defection and backſliding, old perſecutions and bloodſhed. We have ground to fear, that theſe old tranſgreſſions, together with thoſe of a latter date, ly ſo heavy upon the land, that it is made to reel and ſtagger with the weight of them. O when ſhall we be diſburdened of that load?

IV. *Barrenneſs* and *unfruitfulneſs* with reſpect to converſion-work and the bringing forth of children to God, is a grievous malady which the church's womb ſeems to be ſmitten with at this day. Ah! how little is the doctrine of regeneration and the new birth known and experienced among us! How rare is converſion-work now, in reſpect of former times! Our ears have heard, and our fathers have told us, what days of the Son of man have been ſeen in our land, when the Captain of our ſalvation took to himſelf his great power, and mounted his white horſe of a triumphant goſpel, and rode through our cities and congregations, with his crown on his head, his bow in his hand, and his ſword girt on his thigh, going forth conquering and to conquer. When the arm of the Lord did thus awake and put on ſtrength, how glorious were the effects! the preacher's tongue was looſed, the hearers hearts were melted; the word of the Lord did run, and the goſpel had free courſe. The enemies of the power of

godlineſs were filled with confuſion and aſtoniſhment, and made to acknowledge that God was among his people of a truth. Mockers and curious perſons were catched by the word, and hundreds have been wrought upon by one ſermon, and made to date their converſion from it. The angel came down and troubled the waters, and multitudes of diſeaſed ſouls ſtept in at once, and the power of the Lord was preſent to heal them. Such pleaſant ſeaſons have been of late in ſome parts of New England, and in others of the plantations: may the Lord continue them there, and cauſe them to ſpread through all our colonies in America, May he ſend them alſo to Britain and Ireland, and to the poor land where he hath had his dwelling in times paſt, that ſo "the wilderneſs and ſolitary place may be glad for them, and the deſart may rejoice and bloſſom as the roſe, the glory of Lebanon may be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon." Then ſhould our land ſing as in the days of old.

Queſt. Oh, what may be the reaſon of the unfruitfulneſs of a preached goſpel in the land where Chriſt hath had his glorious marchings in times paſt?

Anſ. Surely we muſt juſtify the Lord, and leave our complaints upon ourſelves. A holy God is provoked to withdraw his Spirit from the aſſemblies of profeſſed Chriſtians, becauſe of their formality and hypocriſy, their diviſions and contentions, their ſatisfying themſelves with bare ordinances without the God of ordinances, with communion-occaſions without communion with God. The Holy Spirit and his gracious workings are ſo far from being ſought after, that they are ſcarce credited or believed, nay, by many they are reproached with the odious names of Enthuſiaſm, whimſical notions, and melancholy imaginations. And may not God, in his righteous judgment, make ordinances, a miſcarrying womb and dry breaſts to them?

Again, God by our ſins and backſlidings is provoked to call off the ſtage a godly and faithful ſet of miniſters and Chriſtians, who ſtood in the gap, and wreſtled for God's preſence and Spirit to ordinances, without ſending others to fill their room; nay, inſtead of that, to ſuffer

ſuffer the church to be plagued with a ſet of earthly minded preachers and ſtudents, who give ſad diſcoveries of their carnal motives and ends in purſuing after the prieſt's office, that it is more to win ſtipends than to win ſouls, to get bread to themſelves, than to get glory to God Which ſurely is a fearful judgment and token of wrath againſt a poor ſinful land.

Likewiſe, God is provoked to leave miniſters, and deny them ſucceſs, becauſe of their defection from the uprightneſs, piety, and zeal of our godly anceſtors, from their humility and ſelf-denial, from their ſingle aims at God's glory and the ſalvation of ſouls, from their dependence upon God, in the exerciſe of faith and prayer, for his preſence and bleſſing upon their labours, and from their travelling in birth till Chriſt was formed in their people's ſouls. And, finally, No doubt, many miniſters are unſucceſsful, by reaſon of the grudges and prejudices which they beget in their people's breaſts againſt themſelves, for ſwerving from reformation-principles, and concurring in violent ſettlements and intruſions upon pariſhes, whereby people are tempted to abhor the offerings of the Lord; and ignorance, error, profanation of the Lord's day, immoralities and diſorders, are greatly encouraged. From whence it is too evident, that miniſters are to be blamed as well as people for the preſent barrenneſs under the means of grace. O! that both they and we were helped to ſee the cauſe, and to cry for the balm of Gilead to cure us of it.

HEAD II. I proceed to the *ſecond head*, in the method I laid down, to wit, to take notice of ſome of thoſe dangerous ſymptoms which make our diſeaſes ſeem incurable and deſperate; for which there is yet balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there.

I. It is a dangerous ſymptom, when the body is univerſally diſtreſſed, and when there is a complication of diſeaſes on it, and ſome of theſe of contrary natures. Then the patient's caſe is very hopeleſs, and the cure much deſpaired of, becauſe what is good for one diſeaſe is bad for another. Thus, alas! it is with the body of Chriſt in our land. The church is ſick not in

him with mourning and ſupplication, as he calls us: But we will ſtill go on in our old courſes without relenting. Our caſe is not unlike that of God's profeſſing people of old, Iſa. lvii. 17. "For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him, I hid me, and was wroth." And yet, after all theſe tokens of God's anger, it is added, "He went on frowardly in the way of his heart. Now, can there be any remedy for him in ſuch a caſe? Yes, the Lord ſaith, there is even balm in Gilead for ſuch a deſperate condition, and, which is moſt ſurprizing, that the Phyſician himſelf will come and apply it, as he adds in verſe 18. "I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him. In theſe hopeleſs circumſtances I will ſtep in myſelf, with the balm in my hand, which will heal him of his frowardneſs and perverſeneſs, when nothing elſe can. Now, who could have expected ſuch a word in ſuch a deſperate-like caſe, and that there could be balm for ſuch a froward diſtemper of heart! One might have thought God would have added, "I have ſeen his ways, and will damn him." But inſtead of that he ſays, "I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him." Oh! the condeſcending goodneſs and mercy of God to the chief of ſinners.

VI. A diſeaſe is judged deſperate and incurable, when the patient loſes his ſenſes, or turns lethargic, that he cannot be awakened. Ah! we are become lethargic under our maladies, we have loſt our ſpiritual ſenſes in a great meaſure. Our hearing is gone, we hear not the voice of rods, nor the voice of mercies, the voice of conſcience, nor the voice of God's word, nor do we ſet about the duties they loudly call us to. Our ſight is departed from us, we ſee not the Lord's hand in his diſpenſations; when mercies come, we receive them like brutes, without ſeeing the hand that gives them, or rendering thanks to the giver. When afflictions come, and the Lord's hand is moſt viſible in them, yet we ſee it not, like thoſe, Iſa. xxvi. 11. we ſee not the Achan, the ſin which is clearly pointed at by the rod. Why? becauſe a ſpirit of ſlumber and of deep ſleep, hath fallen down upon miniſters and profeſſors,

rage; but alſo the inflammation of God's wrath, which is worſe than either.

III. When diſeaſes are of long continuance and rooted in the body, the cure is hard, Deut. xxviii. 59. Such are our maladies, which make us ready to ſay, there is no hope. Yet the balm of Gilead can cure the oldeſt and moſt rooted diſtemper. It can heal thoſe who have been diſtreſſed for many years, as ſoon as thoſe who has been ill but a few days. The Phyſician of Iſrael can as eaſily raiſe up his people when their bones are dry, as when juſt new dead, Ezek. xxxvii.

IV. When all about the diſeaſed look on their caſe as deſperate, we loſe hope. This is our caſe; all who view the church, look on her as ſinking; and even thoſe of the moſt faith are putting the queſtion, "Can theſe dry bones live?" And we are apt to ſay of ourſelves, with the poor captives, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. "Behold our bones are dryed, our hope is loſt, and we are cut off for our part." Yet even when all give up the caſe as deſperate, the balm and phyſician in Gilead can effectuate a cure. We have an aſtoniſhing promiſe to the church in ſuch a caſe, Jer. xxx. 17. "For I will reſtore health unto thee, I will heal thee of thy wounds, ſaith the Lord, becauſe they called thee an outcaſt, ſaying, this is Zion whom no man ſeeketh after." Her caſe was hopeleſs, and therefore neglected by all, but even in that caſe the balm of Gilead can "bring health and cure," Jer. xxxiii. 6.

V. A diſeaſe is the more dangerous, when its threatening ſymptoms are not obſerved, ſo as to provide timely remedies. Ah! this is very much our caſe, we obſerve not our dangerous ſymptoms, though "the fire be kindled round about us, we lay it not to heart:" the impending clouds of wrath and judgments do not alarm us, ſo as to make us ſearch and try our ways, and "turn again unto the Lord." The preſent calamities we groan under, as ſcarcity and decay of trade, war and bloodſhed, loſſes and diſappointments, the grievances of church and ſtate, do not make us ſee the Lord's hand in them, nor hear his voice by them, ſo as to humble ourſelves under his mighty hand, and turn to him

to the world with a commiſſion to heal ſouls. This commiſſion he opened and read at the beginning of his miniſtry, Luke iv. 18. and ſtill after owned it to be his buſineſs to heal ſouls, Mat. ix. 12, 13. In this office of healer, he was held forth and typified of old by the *brazen ſerpent* that healed the ſtung Iſraelities, John iii. 14. and by the *ſun of righteouſness* that riſeth to us with healing under the wings, Mal. iv. 2. and by the *tree of life*, whoſe leaves were for the healing of the nations, Rev. xxii. 2.

The Lord Jeſus Chriſt being God-man, is nobly qualified to be our ſoul-phyſician; for, 1. He hath infinite knowledge and ſkill for taking up all diſeaſes, with their cauſes, and the proper remedies for them, ſo that he can never miſtake the caſe of the afflicted, nor make wrong applications for their cure. 2. He hath ſovereign authority and almighty power, whereby he can command diſeaſes to come and go at his pleaſure. 3. He hath infinite pity and readineſs to help the diſtreſſed: as he hath in him the compaſſion of a God, ſo he hath alſo the bowels of a man, which endows him with a peculiar tenderneſs of heart towards us, as being touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and hence he is inclined many times to come to the ſick without being ſent for, to the poor who have nothing to give him, and to be found of them who never ſought him. On this account Chriſt is repreſented by the good Samaritan that came to the wounded man that fell among thieves, and was lying by the way-ſide, in a helpleſs caſe; the diſtreſſed man ſent not for him, but he came of himſelf, he pitied him and took him up, and poured wine and oil into his wounds. 4. He hath wonderful patience towards the diſtreſſed, he doth not leave them for their unthankful carriage, and the abuſes he gets from them, but bears with them all, and reſolutely goes on with his deſigned applications, till the cure be perfected. He knows if he ſhould caſt them off, none elſe could take them in hand, and death would infallibly be the iſſue.

That the Lord Jeſus might convince us the more of his compaſſion and readineſs to heal diſeaſed ſouls, he readily

readily cured men's bodies when he was on earth, and put none away that came to him. His deſign in this was to encourage us to come to him with our ſoul-maladies, and to afford us a ſtrong prop to our faith, and an argument to plead with him, and ſay, "Lord, thou didſt ſhew compaſſion to diſeaſed bodies that muſt rot in the earth, and wilt thou not be moved with pity to precious ſouls that will live for ever? Did the diſeaſes of bodies draw out thy bowels, and ſhall not the wounds of ſouls affect thee much more? Was it not thy main errand to heal ſouls, O reject not thoſe which are laid down at thy feet."

The FOURTH HEAD. I propoſed, in the *4th* place, to enquire into the nature of the balm, and means of healing, which the Phyſician makes uſe of.

In the *firſt* place, the blood of Chriſt may juſtly be called the *balm of Gilead*, that heals ſouls, for it is the meritorious cauſe of our health and cure, and purchaſes all under means of healing to us. This is evident from Iſa. liii. 5. "He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed." Our glorious Phyſician ſaw that no leſs than his blood and ſtripes, his ſuffering and dying in our room, could ſatisfy juſtice, and obtain pardon to take away the guilt and puniſhment of ſin, and procure the graces of the Spirit to remove the power and pollution of ſin, and therefore he willingly ſheds all his blood for curing us of the diſeaſes of ſin. This blood then is our healing balm. Though the ſcripture ſpeaks of other means of healing, which our Phyſician makes uſe of, yet we are to underſtand that all theſe are uſed in ſubſerviency to Chriſt's blood, which is the bleſſed meritorious mean of our cure, the only balm that procures all the other means of healing to us; ſome of which I ſhall mention; as,

I. The Spirit of God, with his ſaving operations in ſouls, is the great mean of healing, which our bleeding Saviour procured for us. He ſends the Spirit to intimate the pardon of ſin to the wounded conſcience, and thereby cures the ſoul of its fears of wrath. And for

curing the power and pollution of ſin, he ſends the Spirit to heal and change the nature, to ſubdue ſin, infuſe grace, and incline the ſoul to holineſs. And, to render the cure univerſal through all the faculties of the ſoul, he enlightens the underſtanding, renews the will, ſoftens the heart, ſanctifies the memory, makes the conſcience tender and lively, and ſets the affections upon right objects. Now, all theſe operations of the Spirit are the purchaſe of Chriſt's blood, as is clear from Gal. iii. 13, 14. "Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us, that we might receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith." May the Lord fulfil that promiſe to us, for healing our ſick ſouls and our ſick land.

II. The word and ordinances of Chriſt are another mean he makes uſe of for healing our ſpiritual diſeaſes. Theſe are the leaves of the tree of life, which are for healing of the nations. As the word is a mean in the hand of Chriſt, and his Spirit for breaking and wounding the hard heart, and therefore called a hammer and a ſharp ſword; ſo it is alſo a mean of healing the wounded ſoul, by bringing healing promiſes to it, and preſcribing remedies againſt ſin, according to Pſal. cvii. 20. "He ſent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their deſtruction." The ſacraments alſo are means of healing, as they ſeal the pardon of our ſins, and bring cordials to our fainting hearts.

III. Afflictions are means of healing, made uſe of by our Phyſician. He ſends croſſes and loſſes to make us feel how bitter ſin is, to cauſe us to ſearch our wounds, to mourn over them, and reſolve againſt ſin for the future. Sanctified rods are the purchaſe of Chriſt's blood to his patients; they are his phyſic to purge away their ſins, Iſa. xxvii. 9. "By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away their ſin. So that believers, inſtead of murmuring, ought to bleſs God for their afflictions, ſeeing they are Chriſt's phyſic which he hath purchaſed for them at a dear rate.

IV. Stupendous providences are ſometimes made uſe of by Chriſt as balm for his church's diſeaſes, when he doth

doth terrible things which they looked not for, as in Iſa. lxiv. 3. Thus he healed the fears of Iſrael, by opening a way for them in the red-ſea. He healed their murmurings in the wilderneſs by giving them waters out of the rock. So the Lord, by ſtupendous diſpenſations and revolutions, hath often brought relief and healing to his diſtreſſed church in our land, as in the years 1560, 1638, 1688, 1714, and at other times. O let us ſtill remember the years of the right hand of the moſt High.

V. Faithful miniſters are appointed as balm and means of healing to diſeaſed ſouls. The great phyſician ſends them to diſpenſe ſound and wholeſome doctrines for that end, 1 Tim. vi. 3. Tit. ii. 1. They are his apothecaries to weigh out, mix, qualify and prepare the medicines according to his preſcriptions: This the apoſtle points at by a miniſter's "rightly dividing the word of truth," 2 Tim. ii, 15. and Chriſt himſelf means it by the "ſteward's giving his houſhold their portion of meat in due ſeaſon, Luke xii. 42. It is happy for a diſeaſed church, when God gives them underſtanding of the times (like the men of Iſſachar) to know what Iſrael ought to do in difficult caſes. And it is as unhappy for her, when they are left to miſtake the proper means, and ſometimes to inflame her wounds, inſtead of healing them. It is the Lord that muſt give miniſters underſtanding in all things, 2 Tim. ii. 7. May they be helped always to depend upon him for it.

VI. Reforming magiſtrates have been made uſe of as balm for the church's diſtempers, when the Lord ſtirs them up to reſtore her liberties, redreſs her grievances and to uſe their authority to curb error and vice, idolatry and ſuperſtition, to call ſynods, to conſult about reformation, and excite miniſters to their duty. Such balm were David, Solomon, Jehoſhaphat, Joaſh, Hezekiah, Joſiah, and Nehemiah, to the church of God in their times. And ſo alſo were Ahaſuerus, Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, and other heathen magiſtrates, by the Lord's turning their hearts to favour his church in their dominions. And when the Lord's time of fulfilling his promiſes to her doth come, he can ſtill make ſtrang-

ſcribe a potion never ſo bitter, I'll drink it. Let Chriſt do with me what he will, if he cure my diſeaſe, all is well. I will not haggle with him for a right eye, or a right hand, or any darling ſin, or any thing dear to me in the world; no, every thing ſhall be parted with at his command. Thus the ſinner, by the great Phyſician's power and ſkill, is made ſick and ſenſible, humble and willing, in order to prepare him for the healing balm.

II. Another ſtep which the Phyſician takes to cure the diſeaſed man: He by his Spirit works faith in his ſoul; that is, he powerfully perſuades and enables him to embrace Chriſt as his Saviour, and apply the balm of his blood and merits unto his wounds, for removing guilt, pardoning ſin, and reconciling God to his ſoul. Now, when this is done, the danger of death is over, John v. 24. "He that believeth ſhall not come into condemnation, but is paſſed from death to life." Faith is a healing grace, for it is the inſtrument which applies the healing balm of Chriſt's blood to the diſeaſed ſoul. Every touch of faith's hand brings healing, nay, every one of its looks are healing, Iſa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ſaved." Thus a look of a ſtung Iſraelite brought healing to his wound. So Peter's look to Chriſt healed him of apoſtacy. Hence Chriſt ſaid to ſeveral diſeaſed perſons, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." So here, when once faith applies Chriſt's blood, the guilt of ſin is cured, its reigning power ſubdued, and the ſtrength of the diſeaſe is broken, it will not prove mortal.

Queſt. How ſhall I know whether I have got this healing faith, faith which hath made me whole?

Anſ. See whether it hath the evidence of a healing faith? 1. Hath thy faith brought thee to a peremptory reſolution to ly at the Phyſician's door, and look to him alone for healing, ſaying, If I die, it ſhall be at Chriſt's door, for there is no other name given under heaven, nor among men, whereby I can be healed. 2. Hath thy faith made thee fall heartily in with the goſpel-method of healing, and to approve it as a beautiful contrivance, and ſay, "God's covenant of grace is

is well ordered in all things, and ſuitable to all my maladies; Chriſt the Mediator of it is a noble Phyſician, and complete Saviour, and therefore I chuſe him in all his offices, and accept of all his preſcriptions for my diſeaſed ſoul: I accept of his blood to waſh me, his righteouſneſs to cover me, his Spirit to ſanctify me, his word to direct me, and his laws to govern me." 3. See whether thy faith hath determined thee to open frankly to thy Phyſician, and entertain him in the beſt rooms of thy ſoul. When Chriſt knocked by his Spirie, did thy faith make thee willing to yield and ſurrender all thy powers and faculties to him? Didſt thou bring the keys of all the rooms of thy ſoul to Chriſt, and particularly of thy will, ſaying, "Lord, come, chuſe where thou wilt lodge, where thou wilt lie, and what thou wilt have, for all I have is devoted to thee, and at thy command." Now, O man, if thou haſt got ſuch a faith as this, then thy faith hath made thee whole, the healing balm is applied, the cure begun, and ſhall aſſuredly be perfected at length.

III. Another ſtep of the ſoul's cure is by the renewing and ſanctifying work of the Spirit. Aſſoon as the Phyſician gives faith to apply the balm, he takes the ſoul into his hoſpital, places him among his patients, whoſe diſeaſe is broken, and who are on the way of recovery. He takes every believing ſoul under his ſpecial care, he kindly viſits and attends them, and carries on their cure by his Spirit's renewing and ſanctifying work: And this he doth by degrees, for the wounds which ſin hath given our natures are ſo deep, that they take long time to heal; nay, it will take all our days before the cure be finiſhed. But though the cure be ſlow, it is ſure.

Queſt. By what ſteps or degrees doth the Phyſician carry on the cure in believers?

Ans. 1. By his Spirit in regeneration; he cures the *mind* of its blindneſs, the *heart* of its hardneſs, the *nature* of its perverſeneſs, the *will* of its backwardneſs, the *memory* of its ſlipperineſs, the *conſcience* of its benumbedneſs, and the *affections* of their diſorder; all this

this according to his gracious promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. "I will take away the ſtony heart, and give you an heart of fleſh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes." It is by his Spirit within us that the cure is carried on.

2. He heals his people by intimating peace and comfort to their diſquieted ſouls, and aſſuring them that God's anger is turned away from them. As the grant of pardon cures the guilt of ſin, ſo the Spirit's intimation of it pacifies the troubled conſcience, and brings healing to the bones which were broken by ſin. The believer's ſore ſtill *runs in the night* until this doth come. Now when the Phyſician is pleaſed to quiet his people's minds, comfort their drooping ſpirits, and deliver them from the apprehenſions of God's wrath, he doth remarkably advance his healing work in them, according to Pſal. xxx. 2, 3. &c. Pſal. vi. 2. Hoſ. xiv. 4.

3. He carries on the cure of his people, by ſanctifying their natures, infuſing grace and holineſs into all the faculties of their ſouls, and adding new meaſures and degrees thereof from time to time. Increaſe of grace, and progreſs in ſanctification, is a continual healing of the diſeaſe of ſin, according to Mal. iv. 2. "The Sun of righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe with healing in his wings, and ye ſhall grow up as calves in the ſtall." Healing and growing are there joined together. The more we grow in ſanctification, the more our cure doth advance. This growth indeed is often inſenſible in believers, yea, ſometimes they will be ſeized with new diſtempers, and be getting new wounds, ſo that the work will ſeem to go back; yet, notwithſtanding, the virtue of Gilead's balm will infallibly prevail in order to the perfecting of the ſoul's cure.

4. He carries on his healing work by cheriſhing weak grace in his people, and bleſſing the means of grace, for ſtrengthening and increaſing it; and ſo he makes good his gracious promiſe and character, Matth. xii. 20. "A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench." We have an inſtance of this in the caſe of Thomas: How tenderly did he blow on his ſmoking flax, and cheriſh his weak faith! John

xx.

xx 27. "Then ſaith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into my ſide, and be not faithleſs but believing."

5. He advances the cure by weakening indwelling ſin and corruption, and removing thoſe diſtempers which hinder the growth of grace; he looſes their bonds, and frees them from their fetters and ſtraitnings in duty, and ſets them at liberty to "walk before the Lord in the land of the living," and even to "ſing in the ways of the Lord," Pſal. cxxxviii. 5.

6. He cauſes his "north and ſouth wind," with their healing influences, to "blow upon their gardens and ſpices," and ſo puts life in their graces, and draws them forth to exerciſe in performing of duty. Thus he quickens faith to embrace and reſt on a crucified Jeſus, and kindles love to entertain him; and he ſharpens the ſoul's appetite after its food.

7. He carries on the cure in his people, by giving them new diſcoveries of Chriſt, and of his fulneſs and ſuitableneſs to their needs, to draw out their faith and love to him. This was one great deſign in ſending the Spirit into the world, John xvi. 14. "He ſhall glorify me, for he ſhall receive of mine and ſhew it unto you." Now, how doth he glorify Chriſt, but by ſhewing them his fulneſs and excellency, and making them willing to part with all things for Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, and content to borrow all they want out of Chriſt's fulneſs, and to make Chriſt their All, in juſtification, and in ſanctification, and in glorification. The more the ſoul makes uſe of Chriſt, and lives near him, it is ſtill ſo much the nearer to perfect health.

8. The Spirit carries on the cure in his people by cauſing them to breathe after a full conformity to Chriſt and his image, that their ſanctification may be completed, and they freed of all complaints of indwelling-ſin and imperfect ſervices. Hence they are made to cry with David, Pſal. cxix. 5. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy ſtatutes!" And with Paul, Rom. vii. 25. "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?" The ſtronger the ſoul's

breathings are of this kind, the nearer it is to perfect health and cure.

IV. The laſt and finiſhing ſtep of the diſeaſed ſoul's cure is at death; it is only then that the ſoul is made perfectly whole. Then it is that our great Phyſician, by his Spirit, pulls up all the roots and ſeeds of the diſeaſe, and makes the ſoul perfect in holineſs, and meet for entering into heaven, where only a ſtate of perfect health is enjoyed. It is in heaven only that ſin and miſery, diſeaſes and complaints, can find no place, and all pain, ſorrow and crying, ſhall paſs away. There, all Chriſt's recovered patients ſhall have perfect and uninterrupted health through all the ages of eternity. May we then have grace to be always looking out and longing for that happy ſtate and healthful place, where the inhabitants ſhall never ſay they are ſick, being all forgiven and healed of their ſin and iniquity! May our bleſſed Phyſician fit us for that place, by beginning, carrying on, and completing our cure from the diſeaſe of ſin, by all thoſe ways and means of healing which he hath appointed, that to his name may be aſcribed glory in the higheſt, through endleſs ages. Amen.

SERMON VI.

On Jerem. viii. 22. *Is there no balm*, &c.

I NOW proceed to the laſt thing propoſed in the method I laid down, viz.

THE APPLICATION.

I. This doctrine ſerves to inform us of the amazing riches of divine love in providing a Phyſician for our diſeaſed ſouls, and ſuch a Phyſician as Jeſus Chriſt the eternal Son of God! One that hath infinitely more knowledge and ſkill than all the angels in heaven: One that hath infinite compaſſions wrapt up in human bowels: One that hath both a tender heart and a tender hand,

Pſalm

Pſalm cxlvii. 3. One that ſuffered his ſide to be opened and his heart to be pierced, that his blood might become balm for our wounds. Behold an aſtoniſhing cure! a matchleſs Phyſician! Other phyſicians are prodigal of their patients blood, but ſparing of their own; but our glorious phyſician ſaves his patient's blood, and pours out his own: And of it he makes an incomparable balm for our wounds.

Again, we may ſee what cauſe we have to bleſs God for his diſtinguiſhing goodneſs to Adam's diſeaſed family in general, and to our diſeaſed land in particular. The angels that ſinned had no phyſician ſent to them, but we have a matchleſs one ſent to us the ſons of men. There are many opulent nations in the world who never heard the news of this Phyſician, and his healing balm! but they are proclaimed in all corners in Scotland! Theſe have the gold and riches of the Indies, but want the balm of Gilead, which is of infinite more value than all they have.

II. We may improve this doctrine in an uſe of lamentation for the ſick and diſtreſſed caſe of our land, and multitudes of ſouls therein dying of their wounds, notwithſtanding the goſpel offers of the glorious Phyſician, and his excellent balm, which they have in plenty. Need I to ſay any thing to inſtruct our diſtreſſed and mournful condition? Surely, if the abounding of infidelity and immorality, exceſs and extravagance, error and ſchiſm, diviſions and breaches, jealouſies and animoſities, complaints and grievances; if divided minds and disjointed hearts; if reelings and ſtaggerings, if altar againſt altar, if doctrine againſt doctrine, if worſhip againſt worſhip, if poſt by poſt, and threſhold by threſhold,—be ſymptoms of a diſeaſed land and church that needs the balm of Gilead; then may we conclude our caſe is bad, and our need great. Ah, now it is a ſickly time with the land, and multitudes are ſo diſtreſſed, every corner is like an hoſpital or infirmary, and few of them are cured. How many are languiſhing and dying around us, of one diſeaſe or another, either of the plague of unbelief, the ſtone of the heart, the giddineſs of the head, the gangrene of error, the falling ſickneſs

of apoſtacy, the palſy of unſteadineſs, the lethargy of ſecurity, the tympany of pride, the frenzy of paſſion, the cancer of envy, the leproſy of vice, the dropſy of drunkenneſs, the fever of luſt, the running ulcer of outbreakings, inward decays, conſumption of ſpiritual ſtrength, or ſome other ſpiritual diſtemper! Ah, our diſeaſes are paſt reckoning. What numbers about us are ſeized with feebleneſs of knees, and weakneſs of hands, ſo that they can neither bow down the one nor lift up the other in prayer to their Maker, and yet never are ſenſible of their miſery, nor enquire for the balm of Gilead, or the Phyſician there.

We may take up a lamentation over the ſick and dying among us, as the prophet did over the Jews, in the verſes following my text, Jer. ix. 1. "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the ſlain of the daughters of my people." Oh! what ſlaughter doth the plague of ſin make in houſes and families both in city and country! There is reaſon for a greater cry among us, than that in Egypt, when their firſt born were ſlain: Of which it is ſaid, Exod. xii. 30. "And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a houſe where there was not one dead." But ah! Our caſe is worſe, for we have many houſes where there is not one alive, but all dead ſpiritually, and ready to die eternally. This alas! is the caſe of this poor land, notwithſtanding the ſovereign balm that abounds in it.

Queſt. Whence is it that ſo few are healed, when the balm and Phyſician are ſo near?

Ans. The cauſe is ſurely in us: For, 1. Many are not ſenſible of their diſeaſes, nor feel their wounds: They want a principle of ſpiritual life, and have no ſenſe of pain; and hence they complain of their inward plagues or ill hearts. The dead have no feeling, no cure, no fear. And therefore many ignorant people ſay, they have good hearts to God, and do thank God for it. Alas! the moſt part are dead, ſee no need of this balm, and will not apply it.

2. Many are in love with their diſeaſe, more than with the Phyſician. They may perhaps ſpeak againſt ſin

ſin, and even pray againſt it, but in their hearts they deſire not that God ſhould hear them. God may ſay to them as in Pſal. lii. 3. "Thou loveſt evil more than good." And how can ſuch expect to be healed?

3. Many neglect the ſeaſon of healing, and do not ſeek after the Phyſician and his balm in due time. They ſlight Chriſt and his goſpel-offers, in the days of youth and health, and never begin to enquire for him till it be too late.

4. Many will not truſt Chriſt wholly for healing, but have a ſquint eye to other phyſicians, as to their duties, prayers, tears, &c. But, my friends, either Chriſt muſt have the ſole honour of your cure, or he will not be your Phyſician.

5. Many will not ſubmit to Chriſt's preſcription for healing; they will not take the bitter potion of ſelf-ſearching, or repentance, or contrition, or godly-ſorrow; nor ſwallow the pill of mortification, or ſelf-denial: and therefore they remain unhealed. O that we could lament over them, and bewail their caſe before the Lord.

III. A 3d uſe of this doctrine may be of conſolation: And ſurely the news it brings of the incomparable balm of Gilead, and the phyſician there, may afford comfort to the ſick church and land wherein we dwell, however diſtreſſed her caſe be. Though it is our duty to bewail it, yet we are not to mourn as thoſe who have no hope. Her wounds indeed are deep, and her breaches wide, yet her caſe is not deſperate while there is balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there. Surely the balm hath not loſt its virtue, nor the Phyſician his compaſſion towards us; nay, we ſtill have pregnant inſtances of his mercy and pity, amidſt the wrath-like diſpenſations towards Scotland, which are ſigns that our good Samaritan hath not paſſed by us on the other ſide, like the Levite, but keeps in the way where we are, and looks with pity on our wounds, willing to apply his balm to them. Yea, his bowels do ſtill yearn to us, as of old to Ephraim, and make him ſay, "How ſhall I give thee up, O Scotland? How ſhal I deliver thee?

My

My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together."

Object. Seeing it is notorious that the Phyſician hath given up many famous churches, when their diſeaſes were deſperate; what ground have we under ſuch dangerous ſymptoms to expect he will pity us, and apply his balm for our recovery?

Anſ. We have ſtill ſeveral grounds of hope; ſuch as,

1. Seeing the Lord hath begun to pour out his vials upon Antichriſt, we may conclude he will not ceaſe till they be all poured out; and ſeeing thereby Antichriſt hath been in a deadly conſumption theſe 200 years paſt, he muſt ſurely expire at length. And tho' ſometimes he may ſeem to recover a little, yet the Lord aſſures us, that he will at length "conſume him with the ſpirit of his mouth, and deſtroy him with the brightneſs of his coming." 2 Theſſ. ii. 8. By which he means his coming in the brightneſs of goſpel-light, attended with the down pouring of his Spirit. Now, when we hear of the Lord's cauſing his goſpel ſun-ſhine to ariſe and ſpread in any place, with the out pouring of his bleſſed Spirit, for convincing and converting of ſouls, the Lord encourages us to look out for the coming of his kingdom, and the downfal of Antichriſt.

2. We have encouragement to hope from that prophecy in Rev. xvii. 16. which foretels that the ten horns or kingdoms which formerly ſupported Antichriſt, ſhall be inſtruments of his deſtruction: it is ſaid, "They ſhall hate the whore, and make her deſolate." Now, the Lord hath made Britain one of thoſe ten kingdoms that hate her, and therefore he will ſtill preſerve (as formerly he hath done in the moſt perilous times) a goodly remnant that ſhall be the prevailing party there, to accompliſh that grand deſign. And ſeeing the Lord is raiſed up out of his holy habitation, and hath already begun the work, he will ſurely carry it on, finiſh it at laſt, however it be interrupted, and things appear unlikely for a time.

3. We may draw hope from the ſecond pſalm, and other ſcripture-texts, in which God the Father promiſeth to "give his Son the uttermoſt parts of the earth for

for a poſſeſſion, and that the iſles ſhall ſee his ſalvation, and wait for his law," which places do take in Scotland, a nation, (though remote and deſpiſed) to which the Lord hath ſhewed a diſtinguiſhing reſpect, by ſending the goſpel early to it, advancing reformation to a great pitch in it, pouring out his Spirit remarkably on it, taking it ſolemnly into covenant with himſelf, appearing often for the intereſt of religion, when almoſt ſunk in it, and raiſing up deliverers for it when oppreſſed by enemies. Now, theſe ſignal proofs of our Redeemer's kindneſs, gives us ground to hope he will not give up the land that from eternity was given him by his glorious Father, and that in time was ſo ſolemnly ſurrendered to him by our fathers, who are now at their reſt.

4. There is a mourning and praying remnant in the land, who are greatly affected with the want of God's Spirit and preſence in ordinances, who deſire to lament after the Lord, and to ſigh and cry for all the abominations found among us. And though the glory of the Lord be gone up from the cherub, yet it ſeems ſtill to hover and ſtand over the threſhold of the door, and many are pleading and proteſting againſt his departure: And God hath a regard to the prayers and tears of a faithful remnant, Pſal. xii. 5. Pſal. cii. 13, 14.

5. It is a hopeful token for the land, when there is a ſtir and noiſe among the dry bones of the young generation, when theſe are awakened, and brought under convictions, and perſuaded to turn from their old cuſtoms and companions, and to look towards Chriſt and heaven. Bleſſed be God for what is to be ſeen of this in ſome places: O that it were general, and over all! This would be a pledge of God's continuing his abode with us; for he will not forſake the work of his own hands, nor abandon the pledges of his grace. Wherefore, let us earneſtly wiſh and pray to ſee more of the Spirit's work among the young in our day.

6. Many of God's worthies, who are now in glory, have gone off the ſtage in the belief and perſuaſion, that God would yet ariſe and have mercy on his Zion in this land; that he would ſignally build her up, and appear in his glory; yea, that there would be more glorious

rious goſpel-days ſeen in Scotland, than they or their fathers had beheld; and we are encouraged to hope that God will not let the words of his dying ſaints fall to the ground.

7. The accounts we have lately got of the effuſions of God's Spirit, and the diſplays of ſovereign grace in in the converſion of ſouls, through the Engliſh plantations in America, and other parts of the world, give us ground to hope that God is about to accompliſh his promiſes to his church in the latter days, when the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Now, if the King of Zion hath already begun his circuit, as if he deſigned to ride in triumph through his churches, can we think he will paſs by Scotland, where he hath a waiting and wreſtling remnant, looking out, and ready to ſtop him with their cry, and even to caſt forth a flood of tears in his way? O! will not ancient kindneſs then revive, and his heart warm to his covenanted land, where his dwelling hath been, and his goings ſeen in the times of old! O! may not poor Scotland alſo plead for a viſit, according to the multitude of his tender mercies? Indeed, the diviſions of Reuben, and our long degeneracy, may occaſion great thoughts and ſearchings of heart about our caſe: yet the foregoing conſiderations may encourage us to wait and pray in hope, however dark and cloudy the day be, eſpecially ſeeing our bleſſed Phyſician hath not taken away his healing balm from us, but doth ſtill preſerve it pure in the land.

Queſt. Seeing there is balm in the land, and the Phyſician willing to apply it, why is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? How is it that Scotland's wounds are ſo long a healing?

Anſ. 1. God in his wiſdom may order it ſo, that our wounds may be more laid open, and the corruptions thereof better diſcovered, for our deeper humiliation. So God kept Iſrael wandering "forty years in the wilderneſs, to humble them and prove them, and to know what was in their heart:" Deut. viii. 2. The continuance of wounds and grievances is needful for the trial and diſcovery of many; for thereby ſuch who were

were under covert are made known, and the corrupt diſtinguiſhed from the ſincere: the falſeneſs and rottenneſs of many had not been made evident, if wounds had not been ſo long kept open, and grievances continued.

II. The cure may be poſtponed to take our hearts wholly off from the creatures, and to convince us of the inſufficiency of all other phyſicians beſide the Phyſician in Iſrael. We do not naturally come to God, until we ſee there is help for us no where elſe: while there is any view of relief from creatures, we go firſt to them; ſo we find, when "Ephraim ſaw his ſickneſs, and Judah his wound," the firſt phyſician they ſought to, were the Aſſyrians, and king Jarib, who could not heal them, Hoſ. v. 13. Upon which account we ſee the judgment is not only continued, but increaſed; for the Lord ſaith in the following verſes, that he "will not tear, but go away" from them; and his deſign therein is to make them turn to himſelf as their only Phyſician, which at length they are brought to, for Hoſ. vi. 1. They ſay, "Come, and let us return to the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath ſmitten, and he will bind us up." It would be a happy effect, if our diſappointments from the creatures would humble us for our ſin and folly, and bring us off all things, to look to God himſelf only for healing.

III. Diſeaſes continue unhealed, when the cauſes thereof are ſecret and undiſcovered. We ſee Iſrael continued in a diſtreſſed caſe, as long as Achan's accurſed thing lay hid in his tent. All the humiliation and prayers of Joſhua and the elders of Iſrael, Joſh. vii. could not heal them, till the accurſed thing was laid open and diſcovered. And this ſhould put us on to try and ſearch more narrowly, if there be not ſome ſecret ſin of this land undiſcovered, ſome Achan in the camp, ſome Jonah hid under deck, which makes the ſea to work, and grow more tempeſtuous; ſo that, let mariners row as they will, there is no getting into the harbour of peace. Surely ſome accurſed thing is overlooked by us, ſuch as our old covenant-breaking, perſecution, bloodſhed, our contempt of the Lord Jeſus,

our giving the world his room, &c. May theſe hid evils be diſcovered; which continue our ſtorm, and perpetuate our diſeaſes, ſo that there is no healing for us.

IV. Our wounds are ſo long a healing, becauſe we do not ſubmit to the Phyſician's directions; we will not abſtain from things which inflame our wounds, ſuch as the invading of the rights of Chriſt and his church; nor humble ourſelves for old and late ſins; we will not put honour upon free grace, nor make uſe of the balm of our Phyſician's blood: we decline to ſet about extraordinary faſting, humiliation, and prayer, and ſay, what a wearineſs is it? We do not cry and wreſtle for the down-pouring of the Spirit, that only can apply the balm, and heal our land, but look to other medicines. Many, alas! though they complain of their diſeaſe, are not willing to part with it, but have a ſecret liking to it. Were we once brought to ſee our diſeaſe, to value our Phyſician, to be wholly reſigned to his will, and to ſay with Paul, "Lord, what would thou have us to do?" there would be hope in Iſrael concerning us.

IV. A *fourth* uſe of this doctrine may be of examination. And I would exhort every one to try if they have yet come to Chriſt, and got his healing balm applied to them. For though believers are not perfectly cured in this life, yet when they come to Chriſt by faith, they ſhare of the healing virtue of his blood, and are put in the way of healing: The force of their diſeaſe is broken, and the Spirit takes them under cure. Examine yourſelves, then, if the healing work be begun in you. I offer you ſome marks of it, ſee if you can apply them to yourſelves.

1. Were you ever brought the length to have ſuch a ſenſe of your ſores, and ſuch a feeling of your wounds, as to be content to give all the world for the balm of Gilead to them? Such a lively feeling, where it is, is a hopeful token; whereas thoſe who are ſtill eaſy about ſin, never ſaw it ſo as to hate it, or make ſerious enquiry for the Phyſician, their wound is unhealed.

2. Is your drought abated, I mean, your thirſt after ſin and the world; are you now out of love with them? this

this faith, the ſtrength of your diſeaſe is broken. But if you be ſtill in love with the world, or any predominant ſin, or go in ſin without remorſe, your diſeaſe continues.

3. Have you a better appetite for your food than formerly? do you reliſh the ordinances and means of communion with God more than before? it is a good ſign. But if you have no liking to theſe, your diſtemper remains.

4. Have you got a high eſteem of your Phyſician, and a heart affection to him: it is a good token: for it is natural for people to eſteem and love thoſe who have cured their diſeaſes, and ſaved their lives; ſo was it with the blind man, John ix. that was cured by Chriſt: he had a great eſteem of him, and all the reproaches caſt upon him by his enemies, could by no means alter his thoughts of him.

5. It is a good ſign if you make your Phyſician kindly welcome to your heart and houſe; if you give him the beſt entertainment you have, and guard againſt every thing that would offend him. But thoſe who ſhut their doors againſt the Phyſician, and refuſe acceſs to precious Chriſt, they are ſtill under their diſeaſe.

6. Can you abide the light better than before? Are you brought the length to love ſearching ſermons, and thoſe miniſters that would ſearch to the bottom of your wounds, in order to a more thorough cure? Are you more deſirous than ever to have ſin diſcovered? Then it is a good ſign. But if you ſhun the light, and deſire, like ſick perſons, to have the curtains drawn upon you; or if you love thoſe prophets beſt who would heal your wounds ſlightly, and only ſkin them over to you, ſaying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace;" as thoſe in Jer. vi. 14. then your diſeaſe ſtill remains.

7. Do you now ſee more and more of the vanity of all other medicines beſides the balm of Gilead? If you now ſee the utter inſufficiency of the balm of your convictions, reſolutions, prayers, tears, reformations, duties, &c. to heal your wounds, it is a good token; but if you are ſtill truſting to any of theſe, you remain unhealed.

8. Have you attained to the frame of the thankful leper, who, when he was healed, turned back, fell down at Chriſt's feet, glorified God, and gave him thanks? as in Luke xvii. 15, 16. Have you got humble and thankful hearts? Do you deſire with the Pſalmiſt to bleſs the Lord with your ſouls, and all that is within you to bleſs his holy name, for healing your wounds and diſeaſes: as in Pſal. ciii. 1. 3. then it is a good ſign.

9. Are you more able for labour and ſervice than formerly? Do you find more ſtrength and willingneſs to run on God's errands, fight his battles, and perform commanded duties? It is a ſign of recovery: for we ſee what is foretold concerning the happy effects of this balm of Gilead in goſpel times, Iſa. xxxiv. 5, 6. "Then the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the lame man ſhall leap as an hart."

10. Have you a holy jealouſy and fear of every thing that might entangle you or draw you into ſin? That is ſurely a good ſign. We ſee what Chriſt ſaid to the impotent man whom he had healed, John v. 14. "Behold thou art made whole, ſin no more." As it is the duty, ſo it will be the inclination of every healed ſoul to guard againſt wounding itſelf any more. It will be the earneſt deſire of that ſoul that it may not go back to the houſe of Jonathan, and its former diſtreſſed condition again. Now, if you can apply one or more of theſe marks to yourſelves, then you may conclude that Chriſt hath taken you under cure: his balm is applied to you, and the work of healing is begun. May we all feel this in ourſelves, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. Amen.

Exhortation

Exhortation to come to Chriſt for Healing.

SERMON VII.

On Jerem. viii. 22. *Is there no balm in Gilead?* &c.

V. HAVING improved the doctrine in ſeveral uſes, I proceed to a *5th uſe*, namely of exhortation. And here, in the name of the Lord, I exhort and beſeech all poor diſeaſed ſouls to come to the bleſſed Phyſician Jeſus Chriſt, who hath excellent balm for healing all their wounds and diſeaſes, be they never ſo deſperate. O ſick ſouls, why are you ſo unwilling to come and be healed? If your bodies be ſick, and a famous phyſician near, there is no ſmall ſtir in riding and travelling to him for help. But though your ſoul be deadly ſick, and in immediate hazard of eternal death, and the great Healer juſt at hand; how little motion is there amongſt you towards him! How amazing is the ſtupidity of the world, which is no better than a common hoſpital! Though every man in it be like the man that fell among thieves, Luke x. 37. robbed, and deadly wounded; yet very few are groaning for this good Samaritan to come and bind up their wounds. How deſirable would it be to ſee diſeaſed ſinners come flocking to Chriſt with their ſoul maladies, like the inhabitants of Genezareth with their bodily ailments, when Chriſt landed among them, Mark vi. 55, 56. there it is ſaid, "They ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds thoſe that were ſick, where they heard he was. And whitherſoever he entered into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the ſick in the ſtreets, and beſought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made whole." Well, did Chriſt refuſe liberty to any of thoſe ſick perſons to touch him? No, they were all welcome, whatever their ſickneſs

ſickneſs was, be it never ſo deadly or deſperate. And this our bleſſed Jeſus cauſed to be recorded here for your encouragement to come to him with your ſoul-diſtreſſes. O to ſee ſuch a ſtir among you about your ſouls, as was among that people about their bodies! Where elſe can you go with them, but to Jeſus Chriſt, the only Phyſician of ſouls? If you go to the other phyſicians, it will juſt befal you as it did that poor woman which had an iſſue of blood twelve years, Mark v. 26, 27. She went to many phyſicians, and ſpent all that ſhe had, and was nothing better, but grew worſe, till at laſt ſhe came to Chriſt, who cured her for nothing.

In proſecuting this exhortation, I ſhall addreſs myſelf to ſeveral ſorts of diſeaſed ſouls. I. The inſenſible and ſecure. II. The ſenſible and feeling. III. Thoſe who are in the way of healing and recovery.

I. I begin with the inſenſible, thoſe who know not their diſeaſes, nor feel their wounds, and therefore ſee no need of the balm of Gilead, or the Phyſician there. As there are multitudes killed by ignorance, ſo great numbers are undone by ſelf-flattery. Many apprehend themſelves to be ſound and whole, who in the mean time are mortally ſick and dying. Solomon ſaith there is a generation of ſuch ſelf conceited perſons, Prov. xxx. 12. In ſuch a caſe was the church of Laodicea, Rev. iii. 17. How fooliſhly did that proud Phariſee flatter himſelf? Luke xviii. 11. 12. He thought himſelf perfectly well, ſound and whole, when his ſoul was deadly ſick, and ready to drop into hell. In like manner do many deceive themſelves. Ah! they never communed with their own hearts, never took their ſouls aſide to enquire if they be yet under the mortal diſeaſe wherewith they were born; or if they have gone to the ſoul phyſician for his healing balm. In order to awaken ſuch ſecure thoughtleſs ſouls, conſider theſe few things:

1. While you are inſenſible of your diſeaſe, your caſe is highly dangerous and miſerable. Why? 1. You are unconverted, unſanctified, and dying in your ſins, John viii. 24. To die in your ſins is infinitely worſe

worſe than to die in a dungeon among ſerpents; for theſe curſed ſerpents, your ſins, will go to the grave with you as your companions, and to the tribunal with you as your accuſers, and to hell with you as your tormentors. 2. Your ſouls, while diſeaſed, are moſt loathſome to God; for you are not only without the image and Spirit of God, but you are ſwarming with the vermin of ſin and filthy luſts. 3. You are ſlaves to the devil, drudging night and day at his work, grinding at his mill, and feeding on his huſks; he hath you in fetters, but you are inſenſible of it: Satan deals with you as the Philiſtines with Sampſon, puts out your eyes that you may not ſee your chains. 4. Your whole actions, natural, civil, and religious, are all an abomination to God. Not only your eating and drinking, buying and ſelling; but alſo your praying and communicating, are abhorred, as being without faith in Jeſus Chriſt. Beſides, the leproſy of ſin which overſpreads you, defiles all your beſt performances. 5. Your diſeaſe is ſtill the more dangerous, that you are not ſenſible of it; for while it is ſo, you are out of the way of healing, according to Mat. ix. 12. The whole ſee no need of a phyſician. Awake, therefore, O ſecure ſoul, conſider thy caſe, and flee to the great Phyſician for help; until you ſee your miſery, you will not prize the remedy.

2. Conſider, though you be moſt miſerable and diſtreſſed by ſin, yet you have the balm of Gilead freely offered to you in the goſpel, that can heal and ſave the moſt diſeaſed ſoul, Iſa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me," ſaith Chriſt, "and be ye ſaved." And though ye have been ſtout-hearted againſt God, yet, ſaith he, "Hearken unto me, I bring near my righteouſneſs to you," Iſa. xlvi. 12, 13. It is a pleaſure to him to bring this balm near to you, and to ſee poor ſinners willing to make uſe of it; for, ſaith he, Ezek. xviii. 32. "I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth, wherefore turn yourſelves, and live ye." See alſo Ezek. xxxiii. 2.

3. Conſider how long you have ſlighted this balm already; wherefore, if you neglect it any longer, your day of grace may come to an end, and your healing time go over; ſo that, when you would be healed, the balm may

may be far from you. Wherefore improve your day, like that people in Capernaum, Luke iv. 40. " Now when the ſun was ſetting, all they who had any ſick with divers diſeaſes, brought them unto him, and he laid his hand on every one of them, and healed them." Go you, O diſeaſed ſouls, and do likewiſe. Many of you have delayed till *the ſun is at the ſetting*, the ſun of the goſpel, the ſun of your life, the ſun of your health and ſtrength. O, then, make haſte before the ſun ſet, to bring your ſick ſouls to Chriſt to be cured: For " now is the accepted time," 2 Cor. vi. 2. Now is your healing day. And if you ſhould loſe this day of your healing, to-morrow may be the day of your eternal wounding.

Queſt. But what ſhall we do to attain to a ſenſe and feeling of our wounds, in order to healing?

Ans. Take this advice:

1. Be diligent in the uſe of all outward means: read the ſcriptures, and get the knowledge of your loſt ſtate in Adam, and the way of ſalvation through a Surety's righteouſneſs. Attend the preaching of the word, which is the uſual means of converſion: be not abſent from the ordinary occaſions of it, leſt you miſs that ſermon that was moſt ſuitable to your caſe, and might have been the means of ſaving your ſouls. The devil is at pains to keep you from ſome ſermons, for he may know what miniſters are preparing before hand, and when he ſees any thing coming that is likely to touch you, he will contrive ſome temptation to keep you back from hearing it.

2. Study to affect your hearts with what you hear of your mortal diſeaſe, the ſinful natures you brought into the world, their pollution, rebellion, and enmity againſt God. Think upon the many acts of rebellion you have broke out againſt heaven. Think alſo how near you are, while unhealed, to everlaſting burning, yea, every moment on the brink of the fiery furnace, and kept out of it only by the thread of life, which may be broke by any bit of bread you eat, by ſlipping of a foot, by ſtumbling of a horſe, and by hundreds of diſtempers, which, like ſo many lighted candles, are ready

to

to burn the thread, and let your diſeaſed ſouls drop into the pit for ever.

3. When God ſhoots the arrow of conviction into the conſcience, do not ſeek to ſhake it out till it reach the end for which it was ſent. Be not like thoſe who go to their callings to work it out, or to their cups to drink it out, or to their beds to ſleep it out, or to their games to divert it out. But go rather to your knees, and pray that the wound may be medicinal and ſaving, that it may be as deep as needful, and the power of the Lord may be preſent to heal you: Apply to Jeſus your Phyſician, that he may take out the arrow with his own hand, and bring the balm of Gilead to the wound.

4. Apply to the holy Spirit, who is the author of ſaving convictions, and implore his gracious influences; for the dry bones ſtir not till he breathe upon them. It is the office of the Holy Ghoſt to apply Chriſt's purchaſe to you, and ſaving convictions are the firſt part of that purchaſe he makes you partake of. Plead then with him, "Lord, come and do thine office, art thou not as willing to apply as Chriſt was to purchaſe? Is not the Spirit the applier as freely promiſed as Chriſt the Phyſician! Is not that a free promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. "I will put my Spirit within you?" It depends upon no condition in us, only it is ſaid, ver. 37. "I will be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael to do it for them." And now, Lord, I am enquiring for it as I can, O do it for me."

II. I come next to addreſs thoſe diſeaſed ſouls who are ſenſible and feeling, ſick ſinners, who are convinced of their diſtreſſed caſe by nature, and their need of the phyſician; you are the proper objects of his care, Mat. ix. 12, 13. and xviii. 11. Luke xviii. 13, 14. I exhort all ſuch to come and employ Chriſt, the only Phyſician of Iſrael, to heal your wounded ſouls. Delay not; for your diſeaſe is mortal; your wound is deep; the ſooner you come, the better. Loſe not the ſeaſon when Chriſt is dealing with you by his Spirit; but when the waters are ſtirred, ſee that you preſently ſtep in, that you may be made whole.

Queſt. How ſhall we improve the ſeaſon, ſo as to be cured of our diſeaſe?

Anſ. Obſerve theſe directions:

1. As you ought to be concerned about your diſeaſe, ſee that your trouble and concern be of the right kind. Be grieved for it, not only becauſe it brings ruin upon yourſelves, but mainly becauſe it unfits you for glorifying God, and enjoying communion with him. Be troubled both for the general corruption of your natures, and for the particular plagues of your own hearts; point out thoſe to your Phyſician which are moſt grievous to you, whether it be hardneſs, blindneſs, unbelief, backſliding, pride, earthly-mindedneſs, &c. Every man that would have acceſs to God, muſt "know the plague of his own heart," 1 Kings viii. 38. Chriſt would have every man to point forth his ailment to him, with the blind man, Luke xviii. 41. "What wilt thou that I ſhall do unto thee?" Let your anſwer be ready like his, "Lord, that I may receive my ſight," Lord, that my unbelief may be removed, that my hardneſs may be cured, my backſliding healed, &c. Lay open all your ſores, and hide nothing from your Phyſician.

2. Come to Chriſt with a firm belief and perſuaſion of his power and ability to heal you. This is the thing he demands of every ſick ſoul, as of thoſe two blind men that followed him crying for help, Matth. ix. 28. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Believe ye that I have all fulneſs in me to anſwer all your wants, to cure all your diſeaſes, and ſuit all your caſes! O for a ſtrong faith in Chriſt's power! This doth greatly glorify him.

3. Plead importunately with your Phyſician for a cure; he allows you to do it, and to fill your mouths with arguments for that end.

1. Plead the ſovereign efficacy of his blood, that it is a remedy of infinite virtue, and can heal the moſt deſperate diſeaſe; ſay with the leper, Matth. viii. 2. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean;" as if he had ſaid, Thou mayſt do with me as thou wilt, but one thing I am ſure of, thou canſt heal me: So ſay you, Lord, I am ſure thy blood can cure and cleanſe me, though I were as vile with ſin as the leper was with his diſeaſe, ſo that, if I die in my ſins, it will not be for want

want of virtue in Chriſt's blood, the balm of Gilead is all-ſufficient. As the leper's argument prevailed with Chriſt to cure him, ſo a ſtrong faith, and perſuaſion of the virtue of Chriſt's blood, will engage him to heal you.

2. Plead the freeneſs of his balm to all diſeaſed ſouls, that the fountain of his blood runs freely to the worſt of lepers, that he ſhuts out none from it, but invites all to come; that thoſe who had the deepeſt wounds and moſt dangerous diſeaſes, have come upon the invitation, and been made whole, as Manaſſeh, the woman of Samaria, Mary Magdalene, the penitent thief, Paul, the Corinthians, &c. Say, Lord, I come with the reſt upon thy call, O do not ſhut me out.

3. Plead your inability to do any thing for your own healing, as the impotent man did with Chriſt at the pool of Bethesda, John v 6, 7. In like manner ſay, "Lord, I have been many years at the ſide of the pool, near the healing balm, but I am impotent, and unable of myſelf to move one ſtep towards it, far leſs to apply it: no man or angel can cure my lameneſs; Lord, if thou do not pity and help me, I muſt even die and periſh within view of the balm."

4. Plead with Jeſus Chriſt, that he alone is the only qualified perſon in heaven or earth to be your Phyſician. "Lord, thou haſt infinite knowledge and ſkill to diſcern my diſeaſe, with its ſymptoms and cauſes, and to preſcribe the proper remedies Thou haſt infinite compaſſions to pity me, and infinite power to relieve me, when I cry for help. Yea, thou haſt human bowels and tenderneſs of heart alſo to ſympathize with me in diſtreſs. Nay, thou haſt a commiſſion from heaven to heal ſuch diſeaſed ſouls as mine, which thou didſt chearfully accept. And thou haſt come a long journey from heaven to earth to viſit the ſick, and proclaim thy commiſſion to them Thou haſt aſſumed my nature, and taken a human body that it might be pierced to ſend forth a precious balm for my wounds; and haſt graciouſly promiſed to apply this balm to all who come to thee, Hoſ. xiv. 1. 4. John vi. 3. Rev. xxii. 17. Yea, thou haſt come to thoſe who never ſought thee

for healing, Iſa. lxv. 1. 4. Luke x. 33, 34. And ſhall not I get healing when I am earneſtly ſeeking it."

5. Plead the glory of his name, and the credit of his blood: Say, "Lord, both theſe will ſuffer, if a poor wounded creature, that relies upon the faith of thy word, and the virtue of thy blood, ſhould be diſappointed and periſh." This was Moſes's argument with God for pity to the Iſraelites, Numb. xiv. 15, 16. "The nations will ſpeak, ſaying, "Becauſe the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land, which he ſware unto them, therefore he hath ſlain them in the wilderneſs." So do you plead, "Lord, what will the devils and atheiſts ſay?" Will they not blaſpheme thy name, and reproach thy blood, and ſay, becauſe thy power and blood were not able to heal theſe diſeaſed ſouls, thou letteſt them periſh?

6. Plead the mercifulneſs of his nature, with David, Pſal. xli. 4. "Lord, be merciful to me; heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee." Thou art a merciful as well as ſkilful Phyſician. O let not a poor ſick ſoul, that depends on the mercy of thy nature, and merit of thy blood, for healing, go away diſappointed.

But poor ſenſible ſinners have many objections againſt themſelves.

Object. I. I know, (ſaith one) Chriſt is a great Phyſician, but I am not worthy that he ſhould come under my roof to heal ſuch a one as me.

Anſ. 1. There was never one healed becauſe of his worthineſs, for it is only the unworthy that Chriſt came to heal and ſave, 1 Tim. i. 15. Rev. iii. 17, 18. Matth. ix. 12, 13. 2. The more ſenſible a ſoul is of unworthineſs, and humbled for it, the more welcome he is to that Phyſician, Pſal. x. 17. Iſa. lxvi. 2. Mat. v. 3. Luke xviii. 14. 3. If you come not to be healed till you be worthy, you will never come, for where can a poor worthleſs ſinner get any worthy or deſirable qualification but from Chriſt only? You muſt come to Chriſt for every thing that is valuable. 4. Seeing Chriſt doth expreſsly call the moſt unworthy to come to him for healing, Rev. iii. 17. 18. 1 John iii. 23. this ſhould encourage you to do it. It was his call that encouraged the

the blind man to come to him, Mark x. 47. "Be of good comfort, riſe, he calleth thee." Chriſt's calls and commands ſhould be obeyed by the unworthy as well as others.

Object. II. But I fear (ſaith another) I am not within Chriſt's commiſſion, and how then can I expect healing from him?

Anſ. It is high preſumption for any man to intrude into God's ſecret decrees, which no angel dare do: This ſuggeſtion then is not from God, but from the devil, to drive ſinners into deſpair, or to keep them away from Chriſt: For the Spirit of Chriſt tells us that "ſecret things belong unto God, and the things which are revealed belong unto us," Deut. xxix. 29. Now, ſeeing it is revealed to you that Chriſt was ſent to ſave and heal the loſt and ſick, the bruiſed and broken hearted, the halt and maimed, the wretched and miſerable, the poor and blind, and calls ſuch to come to him for healing, Mat. xviii. 11. Luke iv. 18. Luke xiv. 21. Rev. iii. 17. 18. And ſeeing you cannot but own that ſome of theſe characters belong to you; this ſhould encourage you to come to Chriſt with expectation.

Object. III. But my wounds are very deep, my diſeaſe is of a deſperate nature.

Anſ. All diſeaſes are alike to Chriſt's blood; it can as eaſily cure the greateſt as the ſmalleſt, 1 John. i. 7. What diſeaſe more deadly than that of the three thouſand who imbrued their hands in Chriſt's blood? Acts ii. and yet they were all healed by it.

Object. IV. But I am ſick of many diſeaſes at once.

Anſ. The balm of Chriſt's blood can as ſoon cure many diſeaſes as one.

Object. V. But my diſeaſes are old and inveterate, and my ſores have run many years.

Anſ. Chriſt hath cured many ſuch; the thief on the croſs had an old feſtering diſeaſe, and ſo had Zaccheus, for he had wronged many, yet this mighty Phyſician cured them both. He cured many old diſtempers in mens bodies, to aſſure us of the virtue of his blood to cure old diſeaſes in our ſouls. Therefore, he cured the woman's

woman's iſſue of blood that had run twelve years. He looſed a woman that Satan had kept bound eighteen years. He cured the impotent man at Bethesda that had an infirmity thirty eight years. All which is recorded for our encouragement to come to Chriſt with our old ſores.

Object. VI. I have relapſed into the ſame diſeaſe, and can I expect healing?

Anſ. Relapſes indeed are moſt dangerous, yet Chriſt doth undertake to heal thoſe who relapſe, Hoſ. xiv. 2. and he actually healed Peter, though he relapſed into the ſame ſin.

Object. VII. But I fear I have no right to Chriſt's blood.

Anſ. Seeing all the ends of the earth are bid to look to it for healing, and Chriſt hath appointed his goſpel to be preached, and his balm to be offered to every creature, you have a full and ſufficient warrant to come and make uſe of it.

Object. VIII. But I have long ſlighted the offers of this balm.

Anſ. The more heinous thy ſin, or deep thy wound be, thou haſt the greater need of this ſovereign medicine: And go not to make thy wound deeper by a new refuſal.

Object. IX. I have eſſayed to go and apply this balm, but find I have no ſtrength to do it.

Anſ. If you have ſincere deſires to accept and uſe it, you have ſome beginnings of faith; and therefore, improve theſe deſires by making frequent eſſays to receive Chriſt and apply his blood. Believing is a duty you ſhould be oft eſſaying and aiming at, even before you find God's Spirit effectually concurring: This you do in other duties; for though you cannot pray or praiſe, communicate, meditate, or ſanctify the ſabbath aright without the Spirit, yet forbear you not to aim at theſe duties, even when you find not the Spirit at work; and neither ſhould you in this caſe. Though you have no power to believe ſavingly, yet ſtill be aiming at it, and believe as you can. The Spirit will pity your weakneſs, when you are making honeſt attempts to do his will; therefore

therefore be aiming to approve the device of redeeming love, to part with your own righteouſneſs, to ſay Amen to the well ordered covenant, to take a crucified Chriſt for your All, and venture your all in his hand. And though you often fail in your attempts, yet ſtill try it again, and at length the Spirit will help you to ſtretch out faith's hand, and faſten it on Chriſt and his wounds to your comfort.

Object. X. But I am afraid Chriſt is not willing to apply his blood to heal me.

Anſ. What more evidences of willingneſs can you aſk from Chriſt? You have both the word and writ of him that is faithful and true, and his oath alſo, John vi. 37. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And to all theſe he adds outward ſigns and ſeals which are viſible to your bodily eyes in the ſacrament, to aſſure you of his willingneſs. Alſo his frankneſs to heal all the bodies of men that came to him while on earth, is given you as a pledge of his willingneſs to cure your ſouls; for you cannot imagine he would be more compaſſionate to mens bodies than to their ſouls, ſeeing it was his great errand to ſeek and heal ſouls, and to ſhed his blood for that end. May we all have faith in that blood, for Chriſt's ſake. Amen.

Advices to thoſe who are recovering.

SERMON VIII.

On Jerem. viii. 22. *Is there no balm, &c.*

III. IN proſecuting my exhortation from this doctrine, there is a third ſort I propoſed to addreſs; namely, thoſe who are already in the way of healing and recovery, through the Phyſician's applying the balm of his blood to them for removing the guilt of ſin, and renewing of their natures, whereby the force

force of their diſeaſe is broken, and they in the way of recovery. To theſe I offer ſome advices.

1. Thankfully admire the generous kindneſs and free love of your Phyſician, in diſtinguiſhing you from the reſt of the world. He hath done that for you which he hath not done for thouſands, nay, for millions of your fellow-creatures, and even for many in thoſe very families and congregations where you dwell. He hath healed your natures when they were ſick unto death; he hath pardoned your ſins, when they were ſinking under guilt O bleſs and praiſe him with David, Pſal. ciii. 1, 2, &c. Chriſt expects a tribute of praiſe from healed ſouls, and obſerves how they pay it, as in the caſe of the lepers, Luke xvii. 18. "Were there not ten cleanſed (ſaith he) but where are the nine? There he counted their number, and found nine healed who returned him no thanks. And this he cenſures as baſe ingratitude to God.

2. Be earneſt with God for thorough and perfect healing, that the diſeaſe of ſin may be wholly ſubdued. Let the work of ſanctification be ſtill carried on; for this is a continued healing of your nature, till at laſt the cure be completed at death.

3. Pity your relations and neighbours, who are ſtill ſick unto death, and do what you can for their cure. Eſpecially pity and pray for your children who are ſick of the plague you conveyed to them. Recommend to them the balm of Gilead, and the Phyſician there. Tell them your experience of the Phyſician's ſkill and tenderneſs, and the virtue of his balm. "O come and ſee; he hath cured me of a deep wound, an old diſeaſe of a hard heart, of dreadful atheiſm, unbelief, blindneſs, earthlineſs, pride, paſſion," &c.

4. Take proper means to preſerve health when reſtored; ſuch as, 1. Live in a good and wholeſome air, that is, in the ſociety of God's people. 2. Keep good hours, and a wholeſome diet, that is, ſtated times every day for the ſoul's refreſhment, by reading, meditation and prayer. 3. Uſe proper exerciſes, ſuch as the exerciſe of faith, prayer, hearing, communicating and

and Chriſtian converſe; for ſpiritual ſloth and idleneſs greatly prejudice the ſoul's health.

5. Beware of whatever may occaſion a relapſe into your diſeaſe, ſuch as the temptations and ſnares which Satan will lay in your way to draw you into ſin; carefully avoid them, and pray for ſtrength againſt them. And particularly, beware of unneceſſary going into infected company, leſt you catch the diſeaſe from them, for ſin is moſt contagious.

6. Let all thoſe be the objects of your ſpecial love, who have got their natures healed, and the image of God reſtored to them. Love them, though they be poor and low in the world, and even though they differ in ſeveral things from you: for if you love them only who are of your way of thinking in all things, that is liker a ſectarian, or party love, than a true Chriſtian love. For it would ſay, you love ſaints more for their likeneſs to you, than for their likeneſs and relation to Chriſt. Now, the true motive of Chriſtian love, is a manlikeneſs and love to Chriſt more than to you. And ſurely, all theſe being members of the ſame body, and children of the ſame family, who will ſpend a whole eternity together in admiring and praiſing the Lamb, ſhould love one another while ſojourning in the wilderneſs below. Chriſt gives this as a mark of his diſciples, and thoſe who are healed by him.

7. Rejoice and bleſs God, when you hear of many ſick ſouls flocking to the balm of Gilead and the Phyſician there, and when there are hopeful ſigns of their healing and recovery. Look upon theſe as the moſt refreſhing news that can be brought to your ears.

8. Learn patience under the diſtreſs of your bodies, ſeeing you have have got healing to your ſouls. Do not murmur at it, ſeeing God ſees it needful for your ſoul's health.

Laſtly, Be concerned for the diſeaſed land wherein you live. If you have got healing to yourſelves, you ought to have public ſpirits to be affected with the caſe of a ſick land and church, eſpecially at a time, when it may be ſaid of her, as of Judah, Iſaiah i. 5. 6. "The whole head is ſick, and the whole heart is faint; from

the ſole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no ſoundneſs in it, but wounds, and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores: they have not been cloſed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." So alas, it may be ſaid of our land, The whole body politic and eccleſiaſtic is ſadly diſeaſed; our kings and princes, nobility, gentry, magiſtrates, miniſters, burgeſſes, commons, and all ranks, are full of wounds and ſores.

Queſt. How is it we are to ſhew our concern for the land in ſuch diſtreſs?

Anſ. Two ways: 1. By earneſt prayer for it. 2. By uſing the means in our power to heal it.

I. Spread out the caſe of the land in prayer before the great Phyſician of Iſrael, and plead that he may look on it with an eye of compaſſion; yea, humbly expoſtulate with God about the church's caſe, like Jeremiah, Jer. xiv. 9. "Haſt thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy ſoul loathed Zion? Why haſt thou ſmitten us, and there is no healing for us?" Alas, no Phyſician nor balm on earth can heal us; no ordinance, ſermons, nor ſacraments, can cure us. All the warnings, reproofs, and judgments in the world cannot heal our wounds. O, if Iſrael's Phyſician would come and do it himſelf! The Lord hath juſtly ſmitten us for our ſins, and is threatening to ſmite us more. Now, what can we do in that caſe but look to him for pity, and plead that the hand which hath ſmitten us, may alſo heal us; for nothing will heal us till he come with the balm of Gilead, his blood and Spirit, to our wounds. This balm can heal nations and churches, as well as ſingle perſons. O then, look earneſtly to that blood that quencheth the fire of wrath for us, and purchaſeth every thing that is good to us, and plead for the ſake of that blood, that God would revive his work in the land, breathe upon the dry bones, and make a ſtir amongſt them, pour out a ſpirit of converſion and of reformation upon men of all ſtations, magiſtrates, miniſters, elders, parents, and teachers of youth, as well as the young generation, that they may turn to the Lord, and exert themſelves for bearing down vice, and promoting Chriſtian knowledge and piety in the land.

Let

Let all cry to God to rebuke the winds of error and diviſion, that truth may triumph, and breaches may be healed; that miniſters and people may have one heart and one mind, to "ſerve the Lord with one conſent." And thus would the health of the church and nation be recovered. I might adduce many motives to preſs you to plead for repentance and healing to the whole land; I ſhall mention a few.

1. This has been the commendable practice of God's people in all ages, as of Moſes, David, Iſaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, &c. as in Exod. xxxii. 11. 12. Pſal. li. 18. Iſa. lxii. 1. Jer. ix. 1. Dan. ix. 17. And this is what the Lord requires of every one, Pſal. cxxii. 6. Joel. ii. 17.

2. Prayers put up for a ſick church or nation are moſt agreeable to God, and have a ſort of commanding power with him, Iſa. xlv. 2. He puts great honour upon ſuch prayers, and makes them means of producing marvellous effects and deliverances, as in Exod. xvii. 11, 13, and xxxii. 14. And we read of the Lord's ſeeking out ſuch wreſtlers that he may honour them, Ezek. xxii. 30. "And I ſought for a man among them, that ſhould make up the hedge, and ſtand in the gap before me for the land, that I ſhould not deſtroy it." Theſe are the men that God delights to honour.

3. The conſideration of the hand you have had, by your ſins, in bringing on diſeaſes upon the church and land, ſhould excite you to wreſtle and plead for healing to her. The laws of common humanity ſhould even oblige you to this duty.

4. They who pray moſt for Zion in her diſtreſſed and wounded caſe, ſhall be the largeſt ſharers in her comforts when God brings healing to her. Theſe ſhall reap moſt plentifully of her joys when the harveſt comes, who now ſow moſt of the ſeed of tears for her in her trouble.

II. In the 2*d* place, I ſaid every one ſhould uſe all the means in their power for healing the church and land. God has appointed men in different ſtations and capacities, to be as under-phyſicians to bring a kind of balm to a diſeaſed land; ſuch as magiſtrates, miniſters,

elders, &c. Theſe, by wholeſome laws, inſtructions, and examples, may contribute very much, through the divine bleſſing, to the healing of our diſeaſe. Nay, private Chriſtians who are in the meaneſt ſtations, if they do what is incumbent upon them, may have ſome ſhare in this bleſſed work of healing a ſick land. As ſometimes we have heard of great cures effectuated by mean and obſcure perſons, when learned phyſicians had given over the caſe as deſperate; ſo private Chriſtians may be inſtrumental in bringing about our cure, when thoſe of greater power and ſkill look on our caſe as hopeleſs. They may be of great uſe to recommend religion to the world, by conforming their practice to its rules, and adorning their profeſſion with ſhining holineſs and Chriſtian virtues, and alſo by avoiding all diſhoneſty and injuſtice, pride and paſſion, malice and revenge, bitterneſs and evil-ſpeaking, and every thing that may beget prejudice in the carnal world againſt Chriſtianity, who are too ready to impute the faults of its profeſſors to the religion itſelf. Private Chriſtians alſo may bring their healing prayers and tears, and pour them out before the Lord in behalf of the diſeaſed land. They may act faith on the blood of Chriſt, our ſovereign balm, and plead it with God, "Lord, was not this blood ſhed for the wounds of the church, as well as of particular believers! Is it not by Chriſt's ſtripes the church muſt be healed, as well as every individual member? Lord, thou haſt a tender ſympathy with every member in diſtreſs, and wilt thou not much more regard the whole body! Lord, ſhe whom thou loveſt is ſick, and nothing can ſave her life but the balm of Gilead: This, thou alone haſt, and none elſe can apply it. Make haſte unto her, O God of Zion, thou art her help and deliverer: O Lord, make no tarrying; let thy power be preſent to heal her." Thus we ſee men of all ranks may be uſeful as under-phyſicians for healing a ſick land.

Object. But, ſay ſome, the caſe of the church and land ſeems deſperate, and her wounds incurable, and what then can be done by us for her?

Anſ.

Anſ. However dangerous her caſe may be, yet it is not quite ſo deſperate, as to make us give over all hopes and endeavours. I ſhewed before what grounds of hope we have yet left us. And though the caſe were more deſperate than it is, we ought ſtill to be in the uſe of appointed means, and never diſtruſt God in any ſtrait whatſoever. We ought always to look to him, who is "wiſe in heart, and mighty in ſtrength," Job ix. 4. And remember the Lord's queſtion to Abraham in a deſperate caſe, Gen. xviii. 14. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord!" Unbelief ſtumbleth at God's power, when it ſeeth no viſible means or inſtruments for bringing events about, not conſidering how eaſy it is for God, when he doth not find means, to create them; and, when he pleaſeth, even to work without them. It is the property of true faith not to make haſte, or preſcribe to God, as to means or times of working, but to wait his leiſure, and depend upon him in the greateſt extremities.

It puts honour upon God, to truſt him when our caſe ſeems moſt hopeleſs, and even to make the deſperateneſs of our caſe an argument in prayer to God, and a ground for faith to faſten upon, ſo as to plead with him the more earneſtly and confidently for help, and to ſay, "Lord, it will be the more for thy honour and glory, to undertake the cure of our diſeaſe, when matters are come to this extremity, that all beſides are giving over our caſe as hopeleſs and deſperate. The news of the balm of Gilead, and the Phyſician there, ſhould ſtrengthen our faith, and ſupport our hopes under the moſt deadly diſeaſe, and make us lift up our head, and look out for him. As old Jacob, when he was juſt a-dying, yet at the news of his ſon Joſeph's being near, he ſtrengthened himſelf, and ſat up on his bed expecting him; ſo ſhould we, when ready to faint on the bed of our languiſhing caſe, endeavour to lift up our hearts at the good news of the balm and Phyſician of Iſrael, and ſay, Is not Jeſus Chriſt the great Phyſician commiſſioned by the Father to heal a poor wounded church and land! This is the time of her need and great ſtrait, and a proper ſeaſon for him to ſtep in for help. Both

in

in ſcripture and experience we find the time of the church's extremity is God's uſual opportunity of working and appearing for her, as in the caſe of Iſaac, when at the point of being ſacrificed, and alſo in the caſe of the Jews, when ready to be cut off by Haman's bloody plot. When there was but an hair's breadth betwixt them and deſtruction, God ſtepped in and ſaved them. It is in the mount that the Lord will be ſeen; ſo the text may be rendered, Gen. xxii. 14.

Queſt. Why doth God let the diſtreſs of his church and people come to ſuch extremity, before he interpoſe for them?

Ans. He doth it for glorious and wiſe ends: 1. To glorify his wiſdom in finding out a remedy, when we can ſee no appearance of it. The Phyſician's ſkill is beſt diſcovered in maſtering a diſtemper, when it is become moſt inveterate and hopeleſs.

2. To ſhew his pity and compaſſion to his people, when their condition is moſt deſtitute. David depended upon God's pity in ſuch a caſe, Pſalm xxvii. 10. "When my father and mother forſake me, then the Lord will take me up." So when enemies think God hath forgotten his church, and men have caſt her off, and they begin to ſcoff at Zion, and call her an outcaſt, then God ſeeth meet to ſhew his pity, to take her under his care, and heal her wounds, Jer. xxx. 16, 17.

3. To excite the ſpirit of prayer in his people. It was for that end the Lord ſuffered his people to be brought to great extremity at the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 10. "The children of Iſrael lift up their eyes, and behold the Egyptians marched after them, and they were ſore afraid, and cried unto the Lord." When they were in great diſtreſs they cried to the Lord, but not before. So Chriſt ſlept in the ſhip, and let the tempeſt riſe to a great height, to bring his diſciples to their knees, Mat. viii. 24. 25. "They came and awoke him, ſaying, Lord ſave us, we periſh." At ſuch a time their prayers are doubled, and moſt fervent, as in Pſal. cxxiii. 3. "Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt." And it is to be obſerved, when ſuch a ſpirit of fervent prayer

is

is pouted out upon the church, it is a ſure preſage of her adverſaries ruin; ſo we ſee it was in Zech. xii. 9. 10. "I will ſeek to deſtroy all the nations that come againſt Jeruſalem; and I will pour upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem the ſpirit of grace and of ſupplications." If this ſpirit were poured out upon the inhabitants of Scotland, it would be a good preſage of the Lord's appearing for her.

4. God puts off to extremity, to draw out his people's faith and dependence wholly upon himſelf. He cuts off the branches of earthly ſupports, to make them claſp to the body of the tree, even to him who is the everlaſting God; and to bring them to reflect upon what he hath done for them in former extremities, and to act faith upon his power and pity, which he exerted for them in days of old. Thus did Jehoſhaphat in his great ſtrait, 2 Chron. xx. 7, 12. "Art thou not our God, who didſt drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people? We have no might againſt this great company that cometh againſt us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." God would have the deliverances he hath given us in former ſtraits, to draw out our faith upon him in new trials, and hence he ſays to Iſrael, when under fears of the Canaanites, Deut. vii. 18. "Thou ſhalt not be afraid of them, but ſhalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh and all Egypt."

5. To humble his people, and bring down the pride of their hearts. God brought his people to great extremities in the wilderneſs, and his great deſign therein was to humble them, as he tells them, Deut. viii. 2. There is a woful root of pride in mens heart that muſt be broken and ſubdued, before they can be meet for heaven. This root is oft breaking out in diſcontent, murmuring, quarrelling, bitterneſs, paſſion, and backwardneſs to ſubmit to God's will. Now it coſts much labour and pains to bring down ſuch proud hearts to the will of God; they muſt even be reduced to great extremities, before they be ſufficiently humbled, and brought calmly to ſubmit, without any riſing of heart againſt God. Hence it is ſaid, Pſal. cvii. 12. "He brought

brought down their heart with labour." And indeed it is a happy preſage and forerunner of God's gracious appearing for his people, when the proud ſwellings of their hearts are quelled, and they are brought to a ſilent ſubmiſſion under his hand, Pſal. lvi. 10. "Be ſtill and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the Heathen," &c.

6. To take his people off from all creature-confidences and lying refuges, which they are prone to look to in ſtraits and difficulties. Great extremities drive men from truſting in the arm of fleſh, and cauſe them to flee to the arm of Jehovah, with whom is everlaſting ſtrength. In ſuch caſes they are made to cry, as in Pſal. lx. 11. "O God give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man." Then it is we are beſt qualified to receive help from God, when we are brought to own the inſufficiency of creatures to relieve us, and ſupply our needs. The man that had the lunatic child in ſad diſtreſs, was in a fair way of getting a cure to him from Chriſt, when he came to be humbled by his diſappointments, to have his eyes turned away from all human help, and was glad to apply to Chriſt as his laſt refuge, Matth. xvii. 14, 15, &c. There we ſee he came and humbly kneeled down before him, ſaying, "Lord, have mercy upon my ſon, for he is lunatic, and ſore vexed, &c. And I brought him to thy diſciples, and they could not cure him." As if he had ſaid, "Lord, the caſe is deſperate and incurable as to human help, and therefore I muſt look to thee alone for a cure; I have now none elſe to go to but thyſelf." Well then, ſaid our Lord, ſince that is the caſe with thee, "Bring him hither to me," ver 17. and he preſently cured him. O that every one would bring their deſperate diſeaſes, in like manner, ſtraight to Chriſt, with hearts humbled by diſappointments, weaned from creature-confidences, and depending on Chriſt as their only Phyſician, and all-ſufficient help. Were we once brought to this frame, Chriſt would in mercy ſtep in and ſay, "Bring the diſeaſe hither to me." It is ſurely owing to our not coming off from ourſelves, and from all creature help, and to our not bringing our caſes

caſes to Chriſt immediately, that our diſeaſes are ſo long continued.

From all which the wiſdom of God doth manifeſtly appear, in letting his church and people be brought to great extremities, before he interpoſe for their help and relief. But ſeeing theſe extremities are Chriſt's opportunities for manifeſting forth his glory, we ought not to deſpair in the darkeſt caſe, but always "to look to and wait upon him that hideth himſelf from the houſe of Jacob." Nay, we ſhould do it, even then when we ſee every man with his hands on his loins in the utmoſt anguiſh and agony, as women in travail, like thoſe in Jer. xxx. 6, 7. where we ſee a moſt ſurpriſing inſtance of God's mercy to Jacob, even then when his trouble comes to that extremity, that nothing in the world could match it; he pities him, and ſubjoins that merciful word, "But he ſhall be ſaved out of it."

And it ſhould encourage us the more to look to and wait upon God, in this dark day, when we hear of his mercy and goodneſs in pitying other nations and countries, when in melancholy circumſtances, by granting a down-pouring of his Spirit on them for reviving his decayed work, and for convincing and converting multitudes of periſhing ſouls by the preaching of the goſpel; making them cry, "What ſhall we do to be ſaved?" and giving them no reſt till they cloſe with Chriſt their Surety, and become new creatures. And it is to be remarked that God has been graciouſly pleaſed to begin this work in New-England, and other parts of America, at a time when they abounded with complaints of darkneſs and deadneſs, decay of religion, backſliding, woful errors and diviſions, as it is in Scotland at this day. Theſe late ſurpriſing and well atteſted inſtances of God's mercy and ſovereign grace, do ſhew us how eaſy it is for God to bring his balm to a diſeaſed land, when in the moſt hopeleſs caſe; and to qualify and raiſe up inſtruments to preach his goſpel with ſuch energy and power, as to rouſe multitudes of ſecure ſouls, and make them "fly to Chriſt in clouds, and like flocks of doves to their windows." He can take away the "ſins of a land in one day, and make a nation to

born at once. He can ſhew wonders to the dead, and make the dead ariſe and praiſe him." So that none ſhould diſtruſt him in the moſt deſperate condition.

Well, then, ſeeing Chriſt is a Phyſician, ſo full of power, and alſo full of compaſſion, whence is it that our diſeaſed land is unhealed, and multitudes are daily dying of their wounds? Surely the blame is not to be laid upon Chriſt, but upon ourſelves, and our unwillingneſs to come to him. Ah! we chuſe death, rather than healing from Chriſt. He may take up that complaint againſt us, as he did againſt the Jews in the days of his fleſh; "Ye will not come to me that ye might get healing, and live: How oft would I have gathered you to be healed, but ye would not?" And thus he complained of their fathers alſo, Pſ. lxxxi. "My people would not hearken to my voice; Iſrael would have none of me!" Oh! my dear friends, are you to follow their curſed example, to reject your healer? Or what are you reſolving to do? What think ye of Chriſt the Phyſician? Do you believe our report of him, or no? The people of other nations are giving ear and believing our report of him, and flocking to him to be healed, and why do you ſit ſtill? Are they yielding and ſubmitting to Chriſt, as their Saviour and Lord? Are they putting the crown on his head, and doing him honour? Why then ſhould ye be the laſt to bring back the King to his houſe? Will ye be the laſt that will do him honour as a King, or give him employment as a Phyſician? Have ye not as much need of him, and as many wounds and diſeaſes as others? O come then alſo, take the goſpel balm, and glorify the Phyſician of Iſrael. Amen.

The

The Glory of the Miniſtration of the Goſpel.

SERMON IX.

On 2 Cor. iii. 8. *How ſhall not the miniſtration of the Spirit be rather glorious?*

IN this chapter the apoſtle runs a compariſon between the Old Teſtament and the New, the law of Moſes and the goſpel of Chriſt, and ſhews the excellency of the latter above the former. He calls the Old-Teſtament-diſpenſation, or law of Moſes, the "miniſtration of death and condemnation;" becauſe it diſcovered ſin, and denounced curſes againſt it; and the law was given with thunder, lightening, and much terror. Yet, at the ſame time, (he ſays) this diſpenſation was in ſome reſpects glorious, ver. 7. Why? It was glorious in the miniſter of it, Moſes, who had a ſhining glory in his face when he brought the tables down from the mount. Glorious, in regard of the glorious manifeſtation of God at the giving of the law: Glorious, in reſpect of the goſpel diſcoveries which were made by the types and ſacrifices of the Old Teſtament. But then, the apoſtle ſhews, that the goſpel-diſpenſation did far excel it in glory, and on that account calls it the "miniſtration of life," becauſe it pointed out the way to life and ſalvation in a plainer manner: And the "miniſtration of righteouſneſs," becauſe it diſcovered a perfect righteouſneſs for ſinners to reſt upon. Alſo he calls it in the text the "miniſtration of the Spirit," becauſe of the great effuſion of the Spirit that attended the goſpel-diſpenſation, eſpecially in the firſt ages. The Holy Spirit did then remarkably "bear teſtimony to the word of his grace," by his inward operations upon the hearers of it. And this was it that made the miniſtration of the goſpel far more glorious than that of the law; for

under the law, there was but little of the Spirit let out for the converſion of ſouls, in reſpect of what was given under the goſpel. The out-letting of the Spirit, in ſuch an abundant manner, made the goſpel-diſpenſation far more glorious than that of the legal; which gives ground for the following obſervation:

Doctrine. The effuſion of the Spirit with a preached goſpel, makes a very glorious diſpenſation. Which I ſhall handle in the following method.

I. Premiſe ſome things concerning the nature and office of the Holy Spirit.

II. Shew when the goſpel may be ſaid to be a miniſtration of the Spirit to the hearers of it.

III. That there are ſome remarkable ſeaſons when a preached goſpel may be called the miniſtration of the Spirit in an eminent way.

IV. Enquire in what reſpects the miniſtration of the Spirit is a glorious diſpenſation.

V. Make application.

I. The *firſt* thing propoſed is, to premiſe ſome things concerning the nature and office of the holy Spirit. And, 1. The word Spirit, in the Hebrew RUACH, in the Greek PNEUMA, ſignifies *wind*, *air*, or *breathing*. It is ſometimes uſed to point forth the nature and eſſence of God abſtractly, as in John iv. 24. "God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth." But moſt commonly it doth ſignify, as in the text, the third perſon of the *holy Trinity*. And ſometimes he is called the *Spirit of the Father*, and ſometimes the *Spirit of the Son*, which ſhews their *oneneſs*, and that he proceeds from both.

2. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by his undertaking in the covenant of redemption, and his ſacrifice on the croſs, obtained the miniſtration of the Holy Spirit to an elect world. This great gift and bleſſing, which is of ineſtimable value, is our dear Lord's purchaſe and legacy to his people, which he deſigned for to ſupply his bodily abſence from them when he went to heaven; John xvi. 7, 8. "If I depart I will ſend him unto you, and when he is come, he will reprove," &c. The Spirit, being Chriſt's legacy and donation, ſhould much endear

dear the gift to us. Some would rejoice to poſſeſs a relique or any thing that belonged to our Saviour in the days of his fleſh. The Papiſts boaſt of ſome bits of the tree whereon he ſuffered, though Chriſt left no ſuch things for our uſe or devotion: But here is a precious relique and legacy, which Chriſt, in love to his people, left them when going away, even his holy Spirit, as his reſident, to abide with them for ever.

3. The church, under the Old Teſtament, had a certain meaſure of the Spirit given her upon Chriſt's account. But the great effuſion of the Spirit was reſerved to the New Teſtament times, and given after Chriſt's aſcenſion, according to his bleſſed compact with the Father, Acts ii. 33. This promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt is called *the promiſe*, by way of eminency, as including all the reſt. And this effuſion was frequently foretold as the great privilege of goſpel-times, Iſa. xxxv. 6, 7. and xliv. 3. Ezek. xi. 9. and xxxvi. 27. Joel. ii. 28, 29. So that, let men reproach the Holy Spirit with his influences and operations as they will, he was propheſied of and expected of old, as the great bleſſing under the goſpel: And men's deſpiſing him now as they do, is but a fulfilling of Chriſt's word, John xiv. 17. "Yet the world cannot receive him, becauſe it neither ſeeth nor knoweth him:" That is, they have no experience of his work in them. But for us not to own and avow the Spirit of God in his work and operations, is in effect to be aſhamed of Chriſt's precious promiſe and legacy which he left us, and to be guilty of the baſeſt ingratitude to our dear Redeemer.

4. The great office of the Holy Spirit, in elect ſouls, is to be the applier of Chriſt's purchaſe to them, which he doth by "teaching them and guiding them into all truth," John xiv. 26. and xvi. 13. "By convincing and reproving them of ſin," John xvi. 7. "By renewing and ſanctifying their ſouls," Tit. iii. 5. 1 Pet. i. 2. "By mortifying and ſubduing ſin in them," Rom viii. 13. "By helping their infirmities in prayer, and interceding for them," Rom. viii. 26. By *comforting* them and *witneſſing* to their adoption, John xiv. 16. Rom.

Rom. viii. 16. Wherefore, ſeeing the Holy Ghoſt is the applier of Chriſt's purchaſe, and is promiſed by Chriſt to ſupply his abſence to us, he ought to be received and valued as the great bleſſing of the goſpel-church.

5. Chriſt hath taught us to make the giving of his Holy Spirit, the chief petition and principal bleſſing we ſhould aſk of God, Luke xi 9, 10. and ii. 12, 13. There he enjoins us to be importunate for this bleſſing, to aſk, to ſeek, to knock; and, for our encouragement, he promiſes, ver 13 that "our heavenly Father ſhall give the holy Spirit to them that aſk him." So the apoſtle Paul prays for the inward operations of the Spirit to the Epheſians, as the greateſt bleſſing he can ſeek for them, Eph. iii. 16. For it is he that works faith, love, joy, peace, meekneſs, and all other graces in us, Gal. v. 22.

II. The *ſecond* thing in the method, is, to ſhew when the goſpel may be ſaid to be the miniſtration of the Spirit to the hearers of it. And it is ſo when the Holy Spirit doth concur with the preaching of the word, for making ſaving impreſſions upon men's hearts and conſciences, and gracious changes in their lives and converſations. As, for inſtance,

1. When he is pleaſed to make cloſe and particular application of the reproofs and threatenings of the word to the ſinner's conſcience, ſaying, as Nathan to David, "Thou art the man," thou art the guilty ſinner that is threatened, curſed, and condemned by the law. Thy life is unholy, thy nature is polluted, thy heart is full of plagues; yea, thy ſoul is black with ſin, and hateful in the ſight of a holy God! And what wilt thou do to be ſaved?

2. When the arrows of conviction are ſo faſtened in the conſcience, that the man cannot ſhake them out; he hath got ſuch diſcoveries of ſin's evil and the ſoul's danger, that his mind cannot be eaſy: No earthly comfort or enjoyment can ſatisfy him while he is within the flood-mark of wrath. He becomes anxious and inquiſitive after the way of ſalvation, as thoſe, Acts ii. 37. and xvi. 30. His queſtions are not, What ſhall

I do

I do for health to a ſickly body? Or for bread to a pinched family? But what ſhall I do to be ſaved from the wrath that is come?

3. The goſpel is the miniſtration of the Spirit to the hearers, when they are brought to deſpair of help and deliverance by any courſe or contrivance of their own; and are driven from all other refuges beſides Chriſt. When they are made to ſee, that no ordinance, no duties nor performances, no frames, no righteouſneſs nor attainments of their own, can ſkreen from wrath, nor yield any reſt to the ſole of their foot. When they are convinced they are in a ſhipwrecked periſhing ſtate in the firſt Adam, and that they have no other plank of ſalvation to truſt to but Jeſus Chriſt, the ſecond Adam. When they ſee themſelves ſinking upon the broken bottom of the old covenant, and that there is no way to be ſaved but to leap from it to the rock of ſalvation, Chriſt, and only to truſt to and hang by the clefts of that rock.

4. The Spirit concurs, when the flinty rock is turned into a water-pool, as in Pſal. cxiv. 8. that is, when the hard heart is ſoftened and melted down into ſtreams of penitential tears for ſin, both original and actual; and particularly for wounding and piercing of Chriſt by ſin, and for long ſlighting him and keeping him at the door of the heart: and when the ſoul is brought to be deeply humbled for miſpent time, miſimproved ſabbaths, offers of free grace, days of health, and precious opportunities of ſalvation.

5. The goſpel is the miniſtration of the Spirit, when thereby light doth ſhine into the underſtanding, diſcovering the excellency of the remedy provided for loſt ſinners, the ability and fulneſs of Chriſt, the ſufficiency of his righteouſneſs, and the ſuitableneſs of his offices and covenant for all our wants and miſeries And when the ſoul's deſires are excited after Chriſt and ſalvation through him, and made to cry, "O that I knew where to find him! O ſaw ye him whom my ſoul loveth?" And when the ſoul is brought to ſtrong purpoſes and reſolutions to venture to Chriſt and caſt itſelf at his feet,

feet, ſaying, "I will go into the King, if I periſh, I periſh."

6. When convinced ſinners are determined to fall in with the goſpel device of ſalvation through Chriſt, heartily to approve of it, renounce their own righteouſneſs for a Surety's righteouſneſs, accept of Chriſt in all his offices, and ſurrender themſelves unto the Lord. And when they are brought to hate ſin, as the enemy and murderer of Chriſt, and to be willing to cut off a right hand and pluck out a right eye for Chriſt, and to ſay with Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?" and with David, "Depart from me, ye evil-doers, I will keep the commandments of my God."

7. The goſpel is the miniſtration of the Spirit, when the hearts of hearers are looſed from the world and carnal things, and brought to ſome meaſure of ſpirituality and fixedneſs in God's ſervice, and to find more delight and ſatisfaction therein, than in all temporal enjoyments, and to ſay, "A day in God's courts is better to us than a thouſand elſewhere. Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy houſe."

8. When they find life and vigour put in all their graces, their faith ſtrengthened, and their love warmed to Chriſt above all things; the wind blows on their gardens, and the ſpices flow out. They have ſenſible liberty and looſing of bonds in their approaches to God; their clogs and ſtraitenings are removed, and they are raiſed above their ordinary frame in prayer. Their hearts indite good matter, their tongue is like the pen of a ready writer concerning the King; their own hearts melt into tears of love and affection to Chriſt, and their words reach others about them with a pleaſant perfume, and warm their hearts too.

9. When goſpel-hearers do find the ordinances bleſſed means of communion and intercourſe with God, ſo that they get ſweet diſcoveries of the beauty of Chriſt and holineſs, they are enabled to plead and feed upon the promiſes, they have peace and joy in believing, their doubts are removed, and they approach to the aſſurance of God's favour, of pardon of ſin, and future glory: They breathe after a full conformity to Chriſt and his

his image, that holineſs may be perfected in them, and the top-ſtone put upon the work of grace. That they may have no more complaints of indwelling ſin, and imperfect ſervices. And, under a ſenſe of God's love in Chriſt, they endeavour to walk tenderly and circumſpectly, to make their light ſhine before men, and to glorify God upon the earth. Then it is, and in the other caſes above mentioned, that the goſpel may be ſaid to be the miniſtration of the Spirit to the hearers of it. And ſurely, ſuch a concurrence and effuſion of the Spirit, with the preached word, would make it a very glorious diſpenſation. O to ſee ſuch remarkable ſeaſons of grace!

III. The *third* head propoſed, was, to mention ſome of thoſe ſeaſons when the preaching of the goſpel hath in an eminent way been the miniſtration of the Spirit. Of which take theſe inſtances:

1. In the apoſtles times, after Chriſt's aſcenſion, there was a wonderful effuſion of the Spirit with the goſpel for the firſt planting of Chriſtianity in the world, according to Chriſt's promiſe, Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 8. Then the goſpel was a glorious miniſtration of the Spirit, when poor illiterate men were helped to preach with ſuch powerful convincing energy, that their words pierced the conſciences, and changed the minds and lives of thouſands of their hearers at once. And though their doctrine was levelled againſt the pride and corruption of mens hearts, and tended to aboliſh the Pagan idolatry, as well as the Jewiſh ſacrifices and ceremonies; and though it was derided by the learned men of that age, and oppoſed by the civil powers with the greateſt violence; yet, under all theſe diſadvantages, it ſpread with amazing ſucceſs, ſo that in twenty or thirty years time, and before the apoſtles died, the goſpel made its way through Judea, Syria, Greece, Aſia, Egypt, Europe, and the whole vaſt Roman empire; ſo that every province in it had plenty of its profeſſors. It was the holy Spirit that directed the arrows of the word into the conſciences of men, with clear and convincing evidences of the truth thereof, and confirmed them ſo in the belief of it, that no trial nor temptation could

ſhake them. It was the effuſion of the Spirit with the goſpel that gave the apoſtles and firſt preachers ſuch extraordinary reſolution, courage and hardineſs, to encounter all difficulties, to bear up under the greateſt miſeries of life, and joyfully to ſacrifice their all for Chriſt, and ſeal their doctrine with their blood.

2. The goſpel was a glorious miniſtration of the Spirit at our *reformation from Popery* above 200 years ago, whereby our reformers were aſſiſted and carried thro' the greateſt difficulties and oppoſition as in the apoſtles days. It was a ſmall mean that God made the riſe of his great work; to wit, Luther's appearing againſt Texellius for preaching up and ſelling his indulgences. Yet from this ſpark, ſuch a fire kindled, that ſet all Europe in a flame, and enlightened many nations that were covered with the thick darkneſs of idolatry and ſuperſtition, in the knowledge of the truth. Such were the out-pouring and efficacy of the Spirit at that time, that the goſpel made a ſwift progreſs in a ſhort ſpace by very mean inſtruments. The preachers employed were none of thoſe who were famed in the world in that age for learning, honour, power, or greatneſs, but men that had lived in obſcurity, and were loaded with reproach by their adverſaries; ſuch as Luther, Zuinglius, Melancton, Bucer, Calvin, Knox, Wiſhart, &c. yet theſe mean men went forth to confront thoſe powers, which then made the earth to tremble, to wit, the Pope and his conclave (whoſe power was then moſt formidable) with the emperor of Germany, and the reſt of the kings of Europe, who then gave their power to the beaſt. Theſe inſtruments had no outward encouragement at firſt, none to ſupport them, but all the world ſeemed to combine againſt them; yet, in ſpite of all oppoſition, the light of reformation brake up more and more; the goſpel was preached with ſuch power, that it prevailed againſt all the powers of the earth, and ſpread from city to city, ſo that in a few years many cities, ſtates and countries, became ſubject to the truth, and that notwithſtanding the bloody ſword and flames of martyrdom which raged againſt thoſe who owned it. O what a miniſtration of the Spirit did at that time

time attend Mr George Wiſhart, when he preached in this town of Dundee, and through Angus, Lothian, and ſeveral places of the weſt of Scotland! how wonderfully were the ſpirits of men then raiſed and affected with the word of God!

3. In the church of Scotland, not only at her reformation from Popery, but alſo frequently ſince, there have been ſolemn times of the out-pouring of the Spirit upon the land, and ſeveral places thereof, as in the year 1596, when the General Aſſembly renewed the national covenant in the little kirk at Edinburgh, and ſynods and preſbyteries did the ſame after their example. Calderwood tells us how this practice was countenanced by God's Spirit, and attended with a general melting of heart and many tears. About the year 1625, in the weſt of Scotland, where the perſecution, from prelates and their agents, was hotteſt for non-compliance with Perth articles, &c. God was pleaſed to countenance and ſupport them with an extraordinary out-letting of his Spirit. This began in the pariſh of Stewarton, and hence was called by the profane of that time, the Stewarton ſickneſs, but afterwards it ſpread through that country, and was very remarkable at Irvine under the miniſtry of Mr David Dickſon, which was accompanied with many convincing proofs of God's power, and many converſions. We have a famous inſtance of that power in the ſolemn communion that was at the kirk of Shots 20th June 1630, when there was an extraordinary down-pouring of the Spirit attending the work, and eſpecially the ſermon on the Monday 21ſt of June, by Mr John Livingſton, that made a great and unuſual motion among the hearers, (who were there convened in great numbers of divers ranks; ſo that near 500 had a diſcernible change wrought upon them, and moſt of them proved lively Chriſtians afterwards. Again, in the year 1638, God gave a general effuſion of the Spirit, which rouzed up all ranks from their ſecure backſlidden ſtate, and made them agree to renew the national covenant. Then the ſpirits of men were greatly raiſed and wrought upon by the word, the ordinances were lively and longed af-

a glorious inheritance, Eph. i. 13, 14. And alſo for qualifying and making them meet to dwell in the ſame for ever.

5. In regard it is neceſſary to diſplay to us the glory and excellency of the perſon and offices of Chriſt, and his infinite fulneſs: and alſo doth open our eyes to diſcern all the glorious perfections of God in him.

6. The Spirit's miniſtration gives a glorious luſtre to the ſouls of believers, and makes them ſhine with true beauty and ſplendour. Hence the King's daughter is ſaid to be "all-glorious within, and their beauty to be as the olive-tree," &c.

7. The miniſtration of the Spirit with a preached goſpel makes a glorious diſpenſation: chiefly upon the account of the glorious and ſurpriſing changes which it makes upon the hearts and lives of men at their converſion. How marvellous were theſe changes upon the firſt pouring out of the Spirit after our Lord's aſcenſion! Thoſe firſt fruits of his purchaſe and promiſe were indeed very glorious. Then the miniſtration of the Spirit, like a mighty current, did carry all before it, and conquered thouſands at one ſermon; yea, it made the moſt obſtinate and inveterate enemies to ſtoop before the word, though preached by poor deſpiſed men. This made the world to wonder, as if ſome univerſal enchantment had fallen upon men; and the more they fought to ſuppreſs and bear it down, the more it increaſed and ſpread. It made the rich chuſe poverty, the ſenſual quit their pleaſures, thoſe who dwelt in fine houſes, to betake themſelves with chearfulneſs to dens and caves of the earth; yea, and ſometimes theſe, who were violent perſecutors of Chriſtians one day, become joyful martyrs with them the next. But not only at that time, but many times ſince, the miniſtration of the Spirit with the goſpel hath produced wonderful changes on its hearers.

As 1. When thereby the dead in ſins and treſpaſſes have been raiſed from the grave of corruption, and made alive to God: Thoſe who were prophane and vitious have changed the whole courſe of their lives, and turned as remarkable for good as before they were for ill.

ill. The leopard hath changed his ſpots, and the Ethiopian his colour, and ſuch who were accuſtomed to do evil, have learned to do well. And all theſe changes have been occaſioned by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, and ſometimes by one word in a plain goſpel-ſermon; which could not be brought about by twenty years moral diſcourſes, and the moſt ſublime ſtrains of human eloquence. And ſometimes weak gifts have been owned and bleſt, when the greateſt gifts have been unſucceſsful.

2. Hereby ſuch particular application of the word hath been made to the conſcience, as hath filled the ſecure ſoul with terror, and humbled the proud man to the duſt, and made him cry, "Wo's me, I am undone, I abhor myſelf in duſt and aſhes!" Thoſe who before were puffed up with pride and a conceit of themſelves, have been ſoon laid low under a ſenſe of their guilt, and ill-deſervings before God. Thoſe who have been mounted upon an imaginary throne of their own righteouſneſs, and have been at great pains to prop and ſupport it, have of a ſudden come down from it, tumbled it to the ground, and ſubmitted humbly to a borrowed righteouſneſs, ſaying, Away with all my own filthy rags, give me Chriſt, who is the "Lord our righteouſneſs:" None but Chriſt.

3. It is a wonderful change to ſee mens natures quite altered; to ſee thoſe who were like ravening wolves become like meek lambs; thoſe who were formerly actuated by hatred and envy, malice and revenge againſt enemies, brought to love all men, even their greateſt enemies, with a love of benevolence, to avoid revenge, to forgive them, to pray for them, and do them good, when in their power. Again, to ſee covetous men, that were great lovers of the world, and hugged it as their beloved idol, abandon it with diſdain, "ſeek thoſe things which are above," and delight in converſe about them; to ſee them made willing to forſake all the world, as loſs and dung, for Chriſt and things above, is a change above the power of nature, and is an evident proof of the glorious miniſtration of the Spirit.

4. By the Spirit's miniſtration, thoſe who hated ſe-

rious

rious godlineſs, derided it as a fancy, mocked and reproached godly perſons; have been made to own there is a reality in religion, and to love and commend that which they hated and cried down, and to honour religious perſons as the excellent ones of the earth, and to delight more in their ſociety than ever they did in their old companions in ſin. This ſurely is the finger of God.

5. Hereby thoſe who have been violent adverſaries of the truth, have become eminent inſtruments to maintain and promote that which they once deſtroyed, and more zealous to promote and advance God's glory and kingdom in the world, than ever they were to oppoſe it. Yea, thoſe who have been very active in perſecuting the profeſſors of religion, both with tongue and hand, have ſo far changed their courſe, as to join themſelves to thoſe whom they perſecuted, and voluntarily choſe to ſuffer reproach and affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.

6. Hereby thoſe, who formerly were wandering after the riches, honours, preferments, and vanities of the world, and placed all their happineſs in them, and ſpent all their cares and thoughts about them,—have been brought to be mainly taken up in wondering at the love of God in ſending Chriſt to the world to ſatisfy juſtice for our ſins, and bear that wrath and curſe we ſhould have borne; and have been made to take more pleaſure in thinking and ſpeaking of Chriſt, and in ſpiritual exerciſes, than ever they had in all their worldly enjoyments; and willingly to reſign all theſe to God's diſpoſal, ſaying, If my main portion be ſecured to me, let God do with theſe external things as he pleaſeth.—Theſe ſurely are glorious changes.

7. The Spirit's miniſtration appears the more glorious in this, that ſometimes theſe changes are made on thoſe who had not the benefit of good example or education, but were brought up in families where they neither ſaw nor heard any thing to the advantage of religion, but, on the contrary, much to fear and diſcourage them from it; ſuch as bitter invectives againſt it,

and

and cruel mockings and ſcoffs at thoſe who owned it: And yet, in the face of all diſcouragement, danger, and perſecution, they have been brought to embrace religion, to take up the croſs and follow Chriſt.

8. By the Spirit's miniſtration, many weak and feeble ſouls have been wonderfully ſtrengthened and encouraged, power hath been given to the faint, and ſtrength increaſed to them who had no might. The feeble have been made like David, and all their diſcouragements and complaints removed. They who could perform no duty, bear no burden, encounter no danger; have been wonderfully ſtrengthened both for work and warfare, duty, and difficulty; and fortified againſt all fears, corruptions, temptations, afflictions and perſecutions, and made to ſay with David, Pſal. xxviii. 3. "Though an hoſt ſhould encamp againſt me, my heart ſhall not fear; though thouſands riſe up againſt me, I will not be diſmayed. And with Paul, Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me." Hereby thoſe who have been oppreſt with doubtings and wavcrings about the truths of God, have been confirmed and eſtabliſhed, and made to ſay with Nathaniel, John i. 49. "Rabbi, thou art the King of Iſrael, thou art the Son of God." And with unbelieving Thomas, John xx. 28. "My Lord, and my God." And like the Iſraelites in Elijah's time, when the Lord manifeſted himſelf by fire, an uſual emblem of the Spirit, 1 Kings xviii. 39. they were made to fall on their faces, and cry out, "The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God."

Laſtly, The miniſtration of the Spirit is glorious, in regard of the glorious intercourſe and communion with God, which ſouls thereby attain to in the ordinances. Then he makes good that word to them, Jer. xxxi. 25. "I have ſatiated every weary ſoul, and repleniſhed every ſorrowful ſoul." Then he puts more gladneſs in their hearts, than when corn, wine and oil abound. Then he makes their doubts and unbelief to vaniſh, and all their clouds and darkneſs, fears and jealouſies, to flee away. Now, they attain to this bleſſed intercourſe, when he gives them ſuch diſcoveries of a crucified Jeſus, and his infinite fulneſs and ſuitableneſs to their

caſe, as fills them with joy and peace in believing, and in laying the ſtreſs of their ſouls, and burden of their guilt upon him. He helps them to embrace and apply the promiſes of the covenant, and to lay claim to them as their own, and ſay, "This and that promiſe is mine: and plead with David, Pſal. cxix. 49. "Remember the word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope." And the pleading and feeding on a promiſe doth afford much inward ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction to the ſoul. He alſo affords them ſuch delight in God's work, ſuch ſtrength in performing of duty, that it is their meat and drink to do his will, and they reckon a day in his courts better than a thouſand elſewhere. So that, though ſometimes they have come to duties with deadneſs and ſtraitenings of ſpirit, yet they have got ſuch relief, that with Hannah they have been helped to pour out their hearts to God in prayer, and have gone away *with their countenances no more ſad.* He gives them ſuch diſcoveries of God's love to their ſouls through Chriſt, as fills them with inward hope and conſolation; yea, ſometimes ſuch a ſtrong aſſurance of God's favour, and of the pardon of their ſins, and of the glory to be revealed, that their ſouls are made to overflow with joy. This communion and fellowſhip with God, by the miniſtration of the Spirit, God's people in all ages have found, and they declared it to be the greateſt reality, when ſtepping over the threſhold of time into eternity, and they have died with the high praiſes of God in their mouths for it.

APPLICATION.

Infer. 1. See hence what thanks and praiſe we owe to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who purchaſed the miniſtration of the Spirit to us by his blood. Hence, days of the Spirit's influences are called *days of the Son of Man,* Luke xvii. 22. All our nearneſs and intercourſe with God is by the blood of Jeſus, Eph. ii. 13. So that it is with a great ſum we obtain this freedom.

Infer. 2. See then from whence it is that goſpel-ordinances have their glory, even from the miniſtration of the Spirit. Without this, ordinances are dead and lifeleſs,

lifeleſs, and dead things have no beauty. We muſt look to the Holy Spirit, then, to put life in ordinances, and make goſpel-days glorious. Alſo, it is to be regreted, that ſo many look to the language and outward ornaments of ſermons, more than to the miniſtration of the Spirit for their beauty and excellency.

Infer. 3. How dreadful a crime muſt it be for any to ridicule or mock at the miniſtration of the Spirit, or to call it all fancy, whim, or enthuſiaſm! Oh, what is this but to reproach and do deſpite to the Spirit of grace! How provoking muſt it be for men to ſcoff at that which is the glory of ordinances, and the glory of any land? Surely they are real objects of pity, and expoſed to great judgments, who are ſo far left and given up, as to glory in their ſhame, be aſhamed of their glory, and mock at that which is the greateſt bleſſing of heaven! O if they would ſtand in awe of this ſin, and remember that word, Iſa. xxviii. 22. "Now therefore, be not mockers, leſt your hands be made ſtrong."

II. A ſecond uſe of this doctrine, may be of exhortation; and here let me exhort all the hearers of the goſpel, to pray earneſtly to God that he may be pleaſed to make the goſpel the miniſtration of the Spirit to them, as it hath been to our anceſtors in this land in former days, and as it is this day in other countries. Let us cry with the church, Lam. v. 21. "Renew our days as of old:" And with David, lxiii. 3. "Let us ſee thy power and glory in the ſanctuary, as in former times." And with Iſaiah, Iſa. li. 9. "Awake, awake, put on ſtrength, O arm of the Lord: Awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old." Let us plead with the church, Pſal. xliv. 1, 23, 26. We have heard with our ears, O God; our fathers have told us what works thou didſt in their days, in the times of old. Awake, why ſleepeſt thou? Ariſe for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies ſake." So let the people of Scotland ſay: "Lord, our fathers have told us what glorious goſpel-days they had, by the miniſtration of the Spirit, when the Captain of our ſalvation took to him his great power, and rode in triumph in the chariot of ſalvation; his arrows were ſharp in the hearts of his enemies, and hundreds dated

their converſion from one ſermon. Ah! we have ſined away Chriſt and his Spirit from the land." Of if all ranks would join to pray him back again: and cry, "Ariſe, O Lord, and have mercy upon Zion; let the time to favour her, yea, the ſet time be now come." It is commonly obſerved, when the ſet time for favouring Zion with the glorious miniſtration of the Spirit, is at hand. God uſeth to pour out a ſpirit of prayer upon his people; for he loves to bring about his glorious deſigns by means of their prayers, that he may put honour upon them. I might add many motives to frequency and fervency in ſuch prayers.

As, 1. Conſider the excellency and uſefulneſs of the miniſtration of the Spirit. It would beautify the church and her aſſemblies, make her beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jeruſalem, fair as the moon, clear as the ſun, and terrible as an army with banners. It would make both miniſters and people to ſhine, our congregations to look with another face, and ordinances to have a new luſtre.—It would put life and ſtrength in the members of the church, give life to their bones, vigour to their withered graces, and ſtrengthen them to run on God's errands, and fight his battles. It would enable them to trample on ſatan, and triumph over ſin, wax valiant in battle, and put to flight the armies of the aliens. It would be as wind to the ſails, oil to the wheels, and make ſouls to run the ways of God's commands without fainting or wearying. It would looſe bonds, enlarge hearts, and give freedom from ſatan's temptations, and ſtrong luſts: It would revive drooping ſouls, turn their water into wine, their ſorrow into joy, their fears into holy confidence, their doubts into godly aſſurance, their complaints into praiſes, and make them to ſing in the ways of the Lord. It would ſatisfy their ſouls, and all their faculties, as with marrow and fatneſs, bring light to the mind, freedom to the will, ſtrength to the memory, peace to the conſcience, and life to all graces. Yea, it would make the ſoul to grow in grace, and ripen apace for heaven. It would make profeſſors of religion grow more ſincere in duties, more fervent in prayer, more attentive

attentive in hearing, more frequent in meditation, more practical in knowledge, more edifying in converſe, more humble for defects, and more thankful for mercies.

2. Conſider the melancholy caſe of the church, for want of the miniſtration of the Spirit. Her beauty is quite marred, her gold becomes dim, and her moſt fine gold is changed. Her womb is barren, her breaſts dry, and her ordinances dead and lifeleſs. Satan reigns and prevails, and precious ſouls are an eaſy prey to his teeth. And believers themſelves fall under ſad languiſhings and decays. Whereas the Spirit's miniſtration would ſoon change the face of affairs, and roll away the reproach of barrenneſs under goſpel-means, wherewith enemies are apt to upbraid us, ſaying, "Where is your God?" Where is the fruit of your many ſermons, faſts and prayers, and ſolemn communions? This was like a ſword in David's bones, Pſal. xliii. 10. when they ſaid unto him, "Where is thy God?"

3. Take a view of the largeneſs of ſatan's kingdom in the world: How great is the number of his ſubjects! And will not every loyal ſubject of Chriſt be concerned and troubled to ſee the devil poſſeſſing ſuch large territories, when their Redeemer has but a little flock? Oh! can you ſee your King's country overſpread with enemies as thick as graſhoppers, when Chriſt's army are pitched before them like two little flocks of kids, and not be affected and grieved for it? Now the only remedy for it is, to pray for the glorious miniſtration of the Spirit. This would ſoon make a mutiny and deſertion in ſatan's camp, diminiſh his followers, and increaſe the army and kingdom of our dear Jeſus. But, to ſum up all:

4. A day of the miniſtration of the Spirit would bring many rare and rich bleſſings along with it, ſuch as diſcoveries of the Redeemer's glory, convictions of the evil and vileneſs of ſin, many crowns of victory, and triumph to Chriſt, great additions to his friends and followers. Then goſpel-light would ſhine clear, ſaving knowledge increaſe, ignorance and error vaniſh, riches of

of free grace would be diſplayed, and ſatan be bound up. Then miniſters and ordinances would be lively, ſecure ſinners would be awakened, dead ſouls would live, hard hearts would be melted, ſtrong luſts ſubdued, and many ſons and daughters born to God Such a day would heal diviſions, cement breaches, make us all of one heart and mind, and bring down heaven to earth. This would redreſs our grievances, remove our complaints, and unite Chriſt's ſcattered flock. It would make true religion and holy perſons to be in eſteem, vice to be in diſgrace, and iniquity as aſhamed to hide its face. Then ſabbaths and communions would be days of heaven. Prayer and praiſe, ſpiritual converſe, talking of Chriſt and redeeming love, would be our chiefeſt delight. O then, pray for ſuch a time.

Queſt. What ſhall we do that our prayers may be prevalent for the glorious miniſtration of the Spirit to the church and land?

Anſ. Take theſe directions:

1. Let us lament after a departed God, as the penitent Iſraelites did, 1 Sam. vii. 2. "All Iſrael lamented after the Lord." They were ſenſible of their loſs, confeſſed they had ſinned him away, and wreſtled for his return.

2. Search out the Achan in the camp, old or late ſins, which may provoke God to withhold his Spirit from us. Mourn bitterly for it; apply to the blood of Jeſus for pardon; abhor and put it away.

3. Be thankful for the leaſt droppings of the Spirit, entertain them kindly, and plead that they may be the forerunners of a greater ſhower.

4. Uſe arguments in prayer for the miniſtration of the Spirit: Plead the multitude of dry bones, which are ſcattered up and down the valley of viſion. How general is the deadneſs both among miniſters and people! And nothing can revive them but the breath of the Lord. Cry, with the prophet, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. "Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon theſe ſlain that they may live. Plead your inability to do any ſpiritual good thing without the Spirit; Lord, we can neither pray, praiſe, mourn, believe, repent,

pent, meditate, read, hear, or communicate, without the miniſtration of the Spirit; we can do nothing ſpiritually; all we do is in a natural, carnal way, which cannot be pleaſing to thee. Plead alſo the promiſes of the new covenant, which are free and abſolute concerning the giving of the Holy Spirit; ſuch as thoſe in Iſa. xliv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. God would have us to turn theſe his promiſes into prayers, if we would ſhare in them; for he ſaith, after making them, that he will be "enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael to do it for them," Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

Object. But, ſay ſome diſcouraged ſouls, we have ſo grieved and vexed the Holy Spirit, when dealing with us, that we fear he will return to us no more.

Ans. 1. Many of God's people have grieved him, and yet he did not leave them finally. 2. Have you a ſenſe of guilt in this matter? Is it the grief and trouble of your heart that you have ſo grieved the Holy Spirit? Are the breathings of your ſouls after his return? then ſurely he is not wholly withdrawn; for if he were, you would be without ſenſe and feeling. 3. Remember that Chriſt ſtill invites you to come to him for every thing, and for the Spirit among the reſt. He hath purchaſed the Spirit for all that come to him; and thoſe who come to him for the Spirit, he will in no wiſe caſt out. May we all have grace to depend upon his word, and both to live and die by faith upon it, that his name may have the glory for ever. Amen.

A Prophecy of the Increaſe of Chriſt's Kingdom.

SERMON XI.

On John iii. 30. *He muſt increaſe*——

THESE are the words of John Baptiſt concerning Jeſus Chriſt, upon the occaſion of his diſciples complaining of Chriſt's baptizing, which drew great multitudes to him, whereby they feared their maſter might come to be darkened or deſerted. But the humble man, inſtead of reſenting it, as his diſciples did, falls a commending Chriſt, and abaſing himſelf; yea, he profeſſeth the greateſt ſatisfaction in the advancement of Chriſt and his intereſt in the world, and compareth himſelf to a friend of the Bridegroom, ver. 29. that rejoiceth in the ſucceſs of the match, which he had been labouring to promote: It being honour enough for the moſt eminent miniſter of Chriſt, to be an inſtrument to recommend his glorious Maſter, and to court and make ready a bride for him.

In ver. 30. where my text is, 1. John foretels the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory, as a thing highly juſt and equitable in itſelf, and moſt agreeable and ſatisfying to him, and all other friends of the Bridegroom, "He muſt increaſe;" that is, his intereſt ſhall grow in the world, his name ſhall ſpread, his throne be raiſed, his crown ſhall flouriſh, his dominions be enlarged, and his ſubjects multiplied. You think he hath gained a great deal already, but that is nothing to what he will gain: And all this in conſequence of the decree of God, and the prophecies recorded concerning the Meſſiah in Pſal. ii. and lxxii. &c. ſo that there is a neceſſity for it, "He muſt increaſe."

2. John foretels the conſequent of this increaſe to himſelf, "I muſt decreaſe;" that is, I muſt be darken-

ed

ed and diſappear. He is not at all diſpleaſed to ſee himſelf obſcured and outſhined by the bleſſed Meſſiah, whoſe ſervant and forerunner he owned he was. No, no, ſays he, Let him ſhine forth as the *riſing ſun*, and and let me diſappear like the *morning ſtar*: Let his name be raiſed, and mine depreſſed, I cheerfully ſubmit to it, I am contented to be any thing, or to be nothing, ſo that Chriſt may be All.

Doct. The increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory in the world, is abſolutely certain and neceſſary. It muſt infallibly be, for God hath ſaid it, Jer. xxiii. 5. "A king ſhall reign and proſper in the earth," Pſal. lxxii. 8. "He ſhall have dominion from ſea to ſea," Pſal cxxxii. 18. "Upon himſelf ſhall his crown flouriſh."

In diſcourſing from this ſubject, I ſhall,

I. Enquire what is that increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory, which we may warrantably look for?

II. What are the times and ſeaſons of this increaſe?

III. What are the reaſons why Chriſt muſt thus increaſe?

IV. Make application.

I. As to the *firſt*, What is the increaſe here meant?

Firſt, Negatively, it is not to be underſtood,

1. Of any increaſe of Chriſt's eſſential glory as God; for this is impoſſible, he being infinite, and therefore the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever, without any variableneſs or ſhadow of turning.

2. It is not meant that Chriſt's kingdom ſhall increaſe or flouriſh in outward ſplendour and greatneſs, like one of the kingdoms of this world. No, Chriſt's kingdom being not of this world, its glory is of a ſpiritual and heavenly nature, and peculiar to itſelf alone.

3. Neither is it to be thought that the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom is to be conſtant or alike at all times, or without decay or diminution at any time. No, no, for ſometimes it ſeems to be brought very low, yea, ſo low was it brought under the Antichriſtian apoſtacy, that it was ſcarce viſible.

2*dly*, Poſitively, the increaſe ſpoke of in the text, is to be underſtood of the flouriſhing of Chriſt's mediatory kingdom, and of the ſpreading of his manifeſtative

glory in the world, which doth conſiſt chiefly in theſe things:

1. In the increaſe and ſpreading of goſpel-light thro' the world, ſo that the dark places of the earth ſhall be enlightened with the knowledge of Chriſt; and thoſe places which had but twilight diſcoveries of him, ſhall attain to brighter views of his excellency and uſefulneſs, and to a clearer inſight into the goſpel-myſteries, and the way of ſalvation through Chriſt and his righteouſneſs imputed to the ſons of Adam. Then the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe with more powerful beams of light and heat upon his churches than before, and at length with ſuch clearneſs and efficacy, as to ſcatter Antichriſtian darkneſs, error, idolatry, ſuperſtition, dead forms and ceremonies of man's invention. For how is it elſe that the man of ſin ſhall be conſumed by the Spirit of Chriſt's mouth, and deſtroyed by the brightneſs of his coming, 2 Theſſ. ii. 8. but by the outpouring of his Spirit with his word preached, and by the bright and convincing appearances of the Redeemer in the glory of goſpel-light? Then is it that Chriſt ſhall increaſe, and his kingdom be enlarged, when "the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea," according to the prophecy of Habakkuk, Hab. ii. 14.

2. This increaſe takes in the Lord's furniſhing his church with many "burning and ſhining lights, able miniſters of the New Teſtament," to be eminent inſtruments of diſplaying his glory in the world. When he is ſignally to increaſe his kingdom, he will raiſe up and qualify miniſters for the work; who ſhall be men of large hearts, fluent tongues, and public ſpirits; ſhining holineſs and piety; undaunted courage and zeal for God; inſpired with a burning love to Chriſt and the ſouls of men; inclined to prefer the good of Jeruſalem to their chiefeſt joy; and willing to run all hazards by ſea and land; to venture all that is dear to them in the world, their reputation, life, and all the comforts of it, for Jeſus Chriſt; and chearfully content to ſpend and to be ſpent for the increaſe of his kingdom and glory, and [illegible]ng of ſouls to him. And particularly,

ticularly, it is a pledge and forerunner of this happy increaſe, when the Lord ſends down his Spirit upon ſtudents and expectants of the miniſtry; graciouſly touches their hearts, and works an inward change upon their ſouls; animates them with ſincere principles and ends, and gives them ſuch impreſſions of the weight of the paſtoral office and the charge of ſouls, that they will not run thereto unſent, nor have an active hand in thruſting themſelves into it, or do any thing to beget prejudices, to mar their ſucceſs; but will wait patiently upon the Lord, till he ſhall open the door, and clear their call to enter into his vineyard.

3. It imports the increaſe of the number of Chriſt's ſubjects and followers. "As the king's honour is in the multitude of his people," Prov. xiv. 28. ſo Chriſt is glorified in the multitude of his ſubjects. Thus ſhall Chriſt's kingdom and glory increaſe in the latter days, when the kingdoms of the earth ſhall become the kingdoms of the Lord; then the Jews themſelves ſhall gather to Chriſt's ſtandard lifted up in the goſpel, together with the fulneſs of the Gentiles; they ſhall fly to it in clouds, like doves to their windows, according to theſe promiſes, Iſaiah ii. 2. Micah iv. 1, 2. Iſa. lx. 8. Rev. ii. 15. Rom. xi. 25, 26. Pſal. cii. 15, 16, 22. Now, what is it that will bring about this glorious increaſe, but the miniſtration of the Spirit with the goſpel? It is this that opens a great and effectual door, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. a door of utterance in miniſters mouths, and a door of entrance in hearers hearts. Then miniſters ſpirits ſhall be enlarged, and their tongues looſed in preaching; and hearers appetites will be ſharpened, and their hearts melted in hearing. When the Lord comes with his Spirit, and gives teſtimony to the word of his grace, then the arrows of the word ſhall pierce the conſcience; the wounded ſhall cry, what ſhall we do to be ſaved? And multitudes ſhall fall under Zion's King, Pſal. xiv. 5.

4. Then Chriſt's kingdom doth increaſe, when truth triumphs over error, and pure doctrine and worſhip prevail againſt ſuperſtition and deluſion. There are happy ſeaſons when the Lord doth magnify his power

in binding up the winds of hereſy and falſe doctrine, and making pure ſcripture-truths to be reliſhed and preferred to the vain opinions and falſe reaſonings of men. Then he cauſes Infidelity, Deiſm, Socinianiſm, Arianiſm, Popery, and Arminianiſm, to be rejected and abhorred: And makes men willing to ſubject their own reaſon to divine revelation, and to fall in with the plain truths of the word, and the goſpel-ſcheme of ſaving loſt ſinners by the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and through his death and purchaſe only. Then he brings men to ſee their own natural impotency and inability to do any-thing for their own recovery and happineſs: ſo that, inſtead of aſcribing their good actions and attainments to the good uſe of their own natural powers, they are willing to acknowledge God in every thing that is good in them, and to aſcribe all to the praiſe and glory of his free grace, who, for Chriſt's ſake, works in them both to will and to do. O that Chriſt and his truth may thus increaſe in the world!

5. This bleſſed increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom, includes the downfal of its enemies, and eſpecially the overthrow of Mahomet and Antichriſt, the ruin of Babylon, and the binding up of ſatan, that grand enemy which excites all the reſt. This is foretold, Rev. xx. 2. Now when once that time comes, that ſatan ſhall be reſtrained and bound up from influencing rulers to perſecute or oppreſs the church: from inſtigating ſeducers to propagate errors; and from exciting ſchiſmatical and ſeditious perſons to ſow diſſenſion among the followers of Jeſus; then the kingdom of Chriſt will greatly increaſe in the world.

6. It imports the increaſe of true piety and holineſs among the ſubjects of Chriſt's kingdom; when they ſhall ſtudy an univerſal conformity to their holy Lord and Maſter, and, like him, make it their meat and drink to ſerve God, and do his will: When their minds and affections ſhall be greatly diſengaged from the world, and the ſtrain of their converſations ſhall be ſpiritual and heavenly: Their lives ſhall ſhine in holineſs and good works; and their great ſtudy ſhall be to

have

have their ſpirits and tempers, their walk and carriage, in all reſpects ſuch as becomes the goſpel of Chriſt: When they ſhall be juſt, righteous, and true, in all their dealings, words, and actions; when they ſhall be meek and lowly, ſober and temperate, patient and peaceable, loving and forgiving, harmleſs and inoffenſive, in all the parts of their converſation: and at the ſame time ſhall abhor and depart from all lying and diſſembling, injuſtice and intemperance, pride and ambition, ſlandering and backbiting, malice and revenge, diſcord and ſtrife, and whatever elſe is contrary to true godlineſs, and the pattern of the holy Jeſus; then it is that Chriſt's kingdom ſhall greatly increaſe.

7. There is in it the increaſe of zeal and public ſpiritedneſs for promoting true religion, and of Chriſtian courage and magnanimity in owning and avowing of Chriſt and his cauſe before the world. When Chriſtians ſhall not be aſhamed of a crucified Jeſus, or of his truths, ordinances or people, but ſhall openly profeſs him; glory in him, and whatever belongs to him; and alſo bear teſtimony againſt every thing that he hates or forbids; and when a ſpirit of reformation ſhall be poured upon all ranks and degrees of men; ſo as every one in their ſeveral ſtations and capacities ſhall do their utmoſt to ſuppreſs ſin, and recommend Chriſt and his ways to all around them: then it is that Chriſt's kingdom and glory will increaſe in the world.

Head II. I propoſed next to enquire into the times and ſeaſons of this glorious increaſe. God hath his ſet times for Zion's increaſe and glory, which none can ſtop, Pſal. cii. 13. The apoſtolic age was the moſt remarkable ſet time for it that ever was, when every ſermon made new conqueſts and additions to the church, till every city and corner of the vaſt Roman empire was ſtored with Chriſtians. But, beſides this, we have promiſes of a more full and ample increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom in the latter days, or towards the end of the world; of which Daniel ſpeaks in his prophecy, Dan. ii. 28, 44. and Dan. vii. 27. There he tells us, that in theſe latter days God will ſet up a great, large, and flouriſhing

flouriſhing kingdom, which will break all others in pieces, and ſtand for ever. That he means the flouriſhing ſtate and glorious increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom towards the end of the world, is clear from this, that he makes the latter days he ſpeaks of, to be the days of the kings which ſhould divide the fourth monarchy, or Roman empire, among them. This empire was to be divided into ten kingdoms, called in the Revelation ten horns, and repreſented in Dan. ii. 41. by the ten toes of the feet of the image. Now, the ſtone cut out of the mount, which is the kingdom of Chriſt, is ſaid to ſmite the image upon its feet, and break them in pieces, ver. 35. which ſignifies Chriſt's conquering the Roman empire, when divided into ten kings, or kingdoms, called ten horns, Rev. xvii. which diviſion hath happened in the latter days. And theſe horns, or kings and kingdoms, being joined together in giving their power to the beaſt, or Roman Antichriſt, as their head, do preſerve ſome ſhadow of the ancient Roman empire or monarchy, ſeeing Antichriſt's power is almoſt as extenſive as the emperor's once was. Hence Antichriſt is ſometimes called the image of the beaſt, and is ſaid to exerciſe the power of the firſt beaſt, Rev. xiii. 12, 14. as being ſet up at Rome in place of the Roman empire in the weſt, and as bearing the likeneſs of the then emperor that reigned there. For at the time the ſaid empire lay dead and wounded by the ſword, or invaſion of the Goths and Vandals, and in effect was not, the Pope got up and mounted the beaſt, which the emperor had rode upon before him, namely, the Roman ſtate, for that is the body of the beaſt, and ſo ſet up a new image of the old Heathen empire at Rome. The papal power may be well called its image, as being like it in largeneſs of dominion, in form of government, and in tyranny and idolatry.

When Chriſt's kingdom was firſt ſet up in the apoſtles' time, the Roman empire was on its iron legs, as repreſented in Nebuchadnezzar's image, that is, it was in its greateſt ſtrength. But in the latter days, which Daniel ſpeaks of, Dan. ii. 28, 44. when Chriſt's kingdom is wonderfully increaſed, the empire is in its feet and

and toes, that is, in ten kingdoms ſubject to the beaſt, as they are explained, Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 17, 18. Now, as Daniel tells us, it is upon theſe that the ſtone ſmites, and ſo it is among them that Chriſt will make his glorious conqueſts in the latter days. For it is ſaid, Theſe kings ſhall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb ſhall overcome them, not only their power and armies, but he ſhall at length overcome their hearts, ſo that they ſhall be brought to hate the whore, and make her deſolate, Rev. xvii. 14, 16. which time is yet to come.

Then it is that Chriſt's kingdom will receive a glorious increaſe, and the kingdoms of this world become his, as in Rev. ii. 15. Then the great river Euphrates will be dried up, for preparing the way of the kings of the eaſt, Rev. xvi. 12. Then the blindneſs of the Jews ſhall be removed, and the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall come in, Rom. xi. 1, 25, 26. Theſe, and many other famous prophecies about the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory, do remain to be accompliſhed in the latter days, at leaſt in the extent; ſuch as thoſe that foretel, That every thing in Jeruſalem ſhall be holy: the people ſhall be all righteous: the ſanctuary ſhall be cleanſed, and purity be both in the worſhip and worſhippers in the temple, and no more a Canaanite in the houſe of the Lord: all nations ſhall be gathered to ſee his glory: there ſhall be no more war betwixt nations: the Jews ſhall be gathered out of all the countries where they are diſperſed, and brought to their own land: they ſhall be no more ſeparate kingdoms, &c. For which ſee Iſa. ii. 2, 3, 4. Iſa. xxvi. 2. Iſa. lii. 1. Iſa. lx. 5, 10, 12, 13, 21. Ezek. xxvi. 24, 28. Ezek. xxxv 21. to 28. Dan. viii. 14. Zech. xiv. 21. Rev. xi. 1, &c. Now, what a glorious increaſe muſt it bring to the Mediator's kingdom and glory, when all theſe prophecies and promiſes ſhall be fulfilled concerning the overthrow of Babylon and Antichriſt, the deſtruction of the Turkiſh empire, the in-bringing of the Jews, with the fulneſs of the Gentiles?

In regard the fall and deſtruction of Antichriſt, or the papal power, is the great mercy promiſed to the church in the latter days, and with which all the other bleſſings

bleſſings promiſed are connected; and that the ſcripture is more particular about the time of its being fulfilled, than any other; it is fit to enquire what is there ſaid about it. And, *firſt*, let us view the foregoing ſigns and forerunners of Antichriſt's fall, and of Chriſt's coming to deliver his people from his tyranny, which point out the times as near; ſuch as,

Firſt, Previous thereto, there will be a great defection among all the churches of Chriſt. Among God's people deadneſs and formality ſhall ſo increaſe, that all the virgins ſhall ſeem to fall aſleep. Errors and falſe doctrines ſhall greatly abound, the luminaries ſhall be darkened, and the ſtars ſhall withdraw their ſhining. Many miniſters ſhall ſuck in corrupt principles about the glorious doctrines of the goſpel, particularly that of juſtification; by which means the earth ſhall be turned into blood and ſlaughter. Yea, in theſe laſt days, there ſhall be falſe teachers, who privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them. There ſhall be many infidels, and profane ſcoffers, who ſhall make a mock of ſerious godlineſs, and the Holy Spirit's operations; and ſcoff at the goſpel-revelation, and the way of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt and his righteouſneſs imputed to us. Alſo they will deride the promiſes of his coming to deſtroy Antichriſt, to deliver his people, and to judge the world, ſaying, "Where is the promiſe of his coming? for all things continue as they were from the beginning." Of theſe things the apoſtle Peter ſpeaks in the 2d and 3d chapters of his 2d epiſtle. Nay, ſo general ſhall the defection and infidelity of the world at that time be, that our Lord himſelf tells us, that when he cometh, he ſhall ſcarce find faith upon the earth, Luke xviii. 8. that is, he will find few that have the firm belief of the goſpel-truths, and few that have faith concerning Chriſt's coming. So great have been the reelings of the world, ſo long the delays of Chriſt's coming, and ſo frequent their miſtakes who have prefixed times for it, that there will remain but little faith in any about his glorious appearance for his church, when behold he is juſt at the door. As Atheiſts, Deiſts, and adverſaries

ries of the truth have been much hardened in their infidelity, by the miſtakes of thoſe who have been too particular and peremptory in timing future events. ſo the godly themſelves may be ſadly ſhaken, and tempted to deſpair of Chriſt's coming, when he ſo long paſſeth their reckoning. Therefore, ſaid he, "When the Son of man cometh, ſhall he find faith on the earth?" But glory to his name, "He is faithful and true," and will come at the appointed time, and the unbelief of man ſhall not make the promiſe of God of none effect.

2. There ſhall be great troubles in the world, and very great fear and diſtreſs in the church, before help ariſe to her, Dan. xii. 1. Daniel is certified, that when Chriſt is to ſtand up for the church, "there ſhall be a time of trouble, ſuch as never was ſince there was a nation, even to that ſame time, and at that time thy people ſhall be delivered" So in Matth. xxiv. and Luke xxi. Chriſt ſaith, that before his coming, there ſhall be ſtrange ſigns in the heavens, and in the earth, earthquakes, wars, and rumours of wars, the ruſhing of nations one againſt another, and ſuch univerſal diſtreſs, that mens hearts will be failing them for fear; and even then ſhall deliverance be at hand.

3. Chriſt will appear when his church's enemies are moſt confident and ſecure, and particularly when the Romiſh harlot is lifted up with pride by her ſucceſs in this or that kingdom, and begins to ſay, "I ſit as a queen, and ſhall ſee no ſorrow." But then it is that her plagues ſhall come as in one day, Rev. xvii. 7, 8. How confident was that cruel perſecutor Diocleſian, of his ſucceſs againſt the church, when he erected pillars, with that inſcription, *Deleta Superſtitione Chriſtiana?* Then he thought he had got Chriſtianity extirpated, and the church ruined; when, behold, her glorious deliverance under Conſtantine the Great was juſt at hand.

4. Before Antichriſt's fall, one of the ten kingdoms which ſupported the beaſt ſhall undergo a marvellous revolution, Rev. xi. 13. "The ſame hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell." By which tenth part is to be underſtood one of the ten kingdoms into which the great city Romiſh Babylon

was divided: this many take to be the kingdom of France; it being the tenth and laſt of the kingdoms as to the time of its riſe, and that which gave Rome the denomination of the beaſt with ten horns; and alſo, it being the only one of the ten that was never conquered ſince its riſe. However unlikely this and other propheſied events may appear at the time, yet the Almighty hand of the only wiſe God can ſoon bring them about when leaſt expected. Though the church ſhould be wrapt about with the blackeſt clouds and thickeſt darkneſs, for a time, that will be no ſtop to God's great deſigns. As a little before the break of day is the darkeſt time of all the night; ſo uſually it is a dark hour before the day-break of the church's deliverance. Let us not then be ſhaken in our minds, whatever ſtorm blow, but firmly believe the word of a true and faithful God, That all his promiſes to his church ſhall be exactly accompliſhed: That he will riſe in due time and ſcatter all his enemies; and that the ſet time to favour Zion will certainly come. May we then be helped to look to heaven, and cry for a ſteady, fixed, and perſevering faith, that we may never be ſhaken, nor carried away by the prevailing torrent of infidelity, but may ſtill be eſtabliſhed upon the firm rock of truth, for Chriſt's ſake! Amen.

Of the Increaſe of Chriſt's Kingdom.

SERMON XII.

On John iii. 30. *He muſt increaſe*——

IN the preceding diſcourſe, I was ſpeaking of the times and ſeaſons of the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory; and ſeeing this increaſe in the latter days is very much connected with Antichriſt's fall, I was enquiring a little into the time of that fall, and mentioning

mentioning ſome forerunners of it. But to get a more certain view of it, it is fit to enquire into the ſcripture account of the time and length of Antichriſt's reign; which, according to Rev. xi. 2, 3. and xii. 6, 14. and xiii. 5. doth amount to 1260 years, as is generally agreed to. Now, if we could hit upon the time when theſe years began, we ſhould certainly know when his reign would end. But God, for our trial and exerciſe, hath left us much in the dark when to begin them. Thus alſo dealt God with his people in ancient times; for though he told them their bondage in Egypt would be 400 years, their captivity in Babylon would be 70 years; and from the commandment to rebuild the temple to the Meſſiah's death, there would be 70 weeks of years, or 490 years: yet ſtill the preciſe time when to begin theſe computations was much queſtioned among them. So that they never were perfectly certain about the exact times of the church's deliverance, until the glorious events happened; and then every one ſaw clearly when they ſhould have dated the beginning of theſe predicted years. Now the ſame is the caſe with reſpect to Antichriſt's reign and downfall. Though now we be not certain when to begin the 1290 years, which is the duration of Antichriſt's reign; yet, after the event of his fall, the time of its commencement will be ſo plain, that after ages will be apt to wonder that we fell into ſuch miſtakes about it. Some in their calculations have begun Antichriſt's reign too early: others again, perhaps, begin it too late. Some of which I ſhall mention, with the grounds of their opinion.

1. Becauſe Antichriſt is called the beaſt with ten horns, Rev. xiii. 1. and the ten horns or kings receive their power one hour with the beaſt, and give their power and kingdom to the beaſt, Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 17. Many therefore did begin Antichriſt's reign, as ſoon as the Roman empire was broken, and divided into ten different kingdoms; to wit, when the tenth or laſt horn appeared, which was the kingdom of the Franks, now called the French, under Childericus their king, in the year of our Lord 456; to which, if we add 1260 years, the time of Antichriſt's reign, the end of it was to have

been in the year 1716, and accordingly many did expect it that year: But the event hath ſhewed that they began Antichriſt's reign too ſoon. And, indeed, the ſcripture doth not ſay that his reign (though contemporary with the ten horns) ſhould begin as ſoon as the laſt of them appeared; and in the year 456, Antichriſt was ſcarce diſcernible in the church. But yet, in the year 1716, Antichriſt got a ſevere blow, when the Lord broke his intereſt in Britain, by defeating the rebellion there in his favour, and ſecuring the Proteſtant ſucceſſion to the crown in the houſe of Hanover.

II. Others did begin Antichriſt's reign 20 years after, viz. in the year 476; becauſe till then ſome ſhadow of the old Roman empire remained. For it was not entirely diſſolved, nor did the ten horns appear formally in its room, till the depoſition of Auguſtulus, who was the laſt of the Roman emperors that reigned over both eaſt and weſt. Now he was depoſed in the year 476, after which time the very name of the Roman empire in the weſt became extinct. Thoſe of this way of thinking did alſo ſtrengthen their opinion from that text in 2 Theſſ. ii. 7, 8. "He who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then ſhall that wicked one be revealed;" that is, Antichriſt, who then was working under ground, would not formally appear until the removal of the Roman emperor, whoſe power in the weſt did greatly hinder the papal tyranny and grandeur. Now, according to this opinion, Antichriſt's reign ſhould have ended in the year 1736, but the event alſo hath diſcovered they began it too ſoon. For though the biſhops of Rome, upon the fall of the empire, made great progreſs in their projected uſurpation, yet Antichriſt was not formally revealed ſo ſoon as 476. Neither did the ſcripture ſay that he would be immediately revealed, and begin his reign upon the removing of the Roman emperor. But tho' the Lord did not overturn Antichriſt in the year 1736, as ſome expected, yet I hope he hath taken a remarkable ſtep toward it, and for the increaſe of his own kingdom in or about that year, by raiſing up eminent inſtruments for ſpreading his glorious goſpel thro' the world, ſuch

such as the Moravian brethren, and Oxford methodists; and particularly by sending forth the Rev. Mr Whitefield, that very year to preach the everlasting gospel with wonderful success. And now, both he and others whom God hath excited, have, since that time, made a noble progress in this work, both in Europe and America, by preaching in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power, the doctrine of free grace, of original sin, of regeneration by the holy Spirit, and of justification by Christ's righteousness alone; which doctrines had been sadly buried before. And I verily believe, that it is by the effusion of the Spirit with the gospel, and the bright convincing appearances of Christ, and free grace in the glory of gospel-light, that Antichrist will be consumed and destroyed; and Christ's kingdom increased and enlarged.

III. Some there are who are very late in beginning Antichrist's reign, not before the bishops of Rome turned grosly idolatrous, and set up for the worship of images, and for excommunicating and deposing the emperors of Constantinople, their civil rulers, because they opposed them in their idolatry. This was first attempted by Pope Constantine against the emperor Philippicus, in the year 713; and afterwards practised with greater boldness and success by Pope Gregory II. against the emperor Leo, in the year 726. According to this opinion, Antichrist's reign will not end before the year 1973.

IV. But the most probable time for commencing Antichrist's reign, seems to be when Boniface III. got himself declared universal bishop and head of the church, and assumed the title of Pope, which was in the year 606. And in this usurped supremacy, he was then owned and submitted to by the ten horns or kings, who gave their power to him. Then it was the Pope became Christ's declared opposite, by usurping his peculiar offices and titles, and so appeared formally to be Antichrist. Now, if we add to 606, the time of Antichrist's reign, 1260 years, his dominion will not end till the year 1866, which is 124 years hence. Though none now living will see this, yet we may comfort ourselves,

ſelves, as once a godly man did: "I have had a longing deſire," ſaid he, "to ſee or hear of the fall of Antichriſt: but I check myſelf, I ſhall go to heaven, and there the news of it ſhall quickly arrive, for both angels and ſaints will rejoice at it, Rev. xviii. 20. Why, that will be the happy time of the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory. May God haſten it for Chriſt's ſake.

The *third Head.* I propoſe next to give ſome reaſons why Chriſt muſt increaſe as above:

1. Becauſe of the decree and promiſe of God, which cannot fail. He hath promiſed this not only to the church, Jer. xxiii. 5. but alſo to Chriſt himſelf, Pſal. ii. 8. and cx. 1, 2. And ſurely "he will not alter the thing that is gone out of his lips, he will not lie unto David, Pſal. lxxxix. 34, 35.

2. Becauſe it is for the ſake of the kingdom of Chriſt, and its increaſe, that God hath made the world, and hath given the adminiſtration of the kingdom of providence to Chriſt himſelf in order to ſecure the accompliſhment of all the glorious promiſes made to him, the reins of government are put in his own hand, Mat. xxviii. 18. Eph. i. 22. And, to be ſure, the great Mediator will ſee to his own intereſt.

3. Becauſe Chriſt is the darling of heaven, dearly beloved of God for undertaking the redemption of a loſt world, a work whereby God is highly glorified. In this tranſaction, he chearfully complied with the divine will, became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs, and therefore his name muſt be exalted above every name, and every knee muſt bow before him, Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10.

APPLICATION.

I. Uſe may be of *information:*

1. We here ſee what encouragement we have to pray as we are taught, *Thy kingdom come*, and that it may be increaſed and enlarged; ſeeing we pray for what God hath decreed, promiſed and foretold, and muſt certainly come to paſs.

2. It

2. It muſt then be great folly to oppoſe the flouriſhing of Chriſt's kingdom; they who do it have a ſtrong party to fight againſt, even the omnipotent God, who hath ſaid of Chriſt and his kingdom, *He muſt encreaſe.*

II. Uſe may be of reproof and warning to all who would hinder the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory in the world; ſuch as,

1. Thoſe who perſecute and oppreſs his people.

2. Thoſe who promote the violent ſettlement of miniſters contrary to the will of congregations, and thereby put a ſtop to the converſion and edification of ſouls.

3. Thoſe who promote infidelity, error, or any doctrine in the church, contrary to the ſimplicity and purity of the goſpel, and the ſcripture ſcheme of ſalvation by Chriſt and his ſurety-righteouſneſs, whereby free grace is exalted and ſelf debaſed.

4. Thoſe who refuſe to ſubject themſelves to the laws of his kingdom, and will rather obey their own paſſions and luſts, ſaying in their hearts, "We will not have this man to reign over us;" if Chriſt be a King, let him be a King without a kingdom, ſubjects, or laws; if we could, he ſhould have none. O ſinners, take heed what you are doing: you directly oppoſe the will of that God, who ſaith, *He muſt increaſe.*

III. Uſe of *lamentation.* We may here take occaſion to bewail the ſtate of Chriſt's kingdom in divers places, in which it once flouriſhed and increaſed, but now, alas! decreaſeth; as in France, Germany, Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Piedmont, and other foreign parts, and likewiſe in Britain and Ireland, and particularly in our mother church of Scotland! Oh! what a dreadful flood of infidelity, atheiſm, irreligion, damnable hereſies, looſeneſs of principle and of practice, contempt of God and religion, ſcoffings at the truths of God and ſerious godlineſs, hath broke out in this age, and ſwelled to a greater height than at any time ſince our bleſſed reformation. Our holy Chriſtian religion, in its firm foundations and infallible proofs, hath been openly attacked and ridiculed by profeſſed infidels and pretenders to reaſon amongſt us, and that notwithſtanding the ſtrong obligations they ly under by their baptiſm and education,

education to adhere to it. And many pretended friends have been undermining and deſtroying it, by promoting opinions and practices inconſiſtent with its purity and intereſt. Yea, all ranks of us, whether magiſtrates, miniſters, nobility, gentry, citizens and commons, are ſadly chargeable with the prevailing defections and declenſions of the age. Alas, we have left our firſt love, and have woſully degenerated from our anceſtors piety, zeal, and ſolemn engagements to the Lord! How lamentable is our neglect of family-worſhip, ſecret prayer, ſabbath-ſanctification, and goſpel holineſs! As alſo our loſing our former livelineſs and ſpirituality in God's worſhip and ſervice, and letting our devotion dwindle away into a dead formality, and mere bodily ſervice! And, finally, how ſtrong is the propenſity of the preſent generation to vanity, lightneſs, plays, comedies, romances, idle diverſions, contempt of ordinances, lying, cheating, perjury, and all ſorts of immoral practices.

Upon account whereof God is provoked to forſake his ordinances, and ſmite our church with ſore judgments, ſuch as a ſpirit of diviſion, a miſcarrying womb, and dry breaſts, impenitency and hardneſs of heart, ſuſpending the Spirit's influences, ſo as hearts are not melted by the word. The angel deſcends not to trouble the waters, and the diſeaſed ſtep not in to be healed as in former days. Our hearts do not burn while Chriſt is talking with us; the times of refreſhing come not from the preſence of the Lord. And, alas! we who are in the miniſtry want not reaſon to fear that we have a hand in bringing on the judgments, by our undertaking the miniſtry for carnal ends, and without experimental knowledge of the Spirit's work in regeneration; helping in lax men to the miniſtry, and diſcouraging the more ſerious; little reading and ſtudying the ſcriptures; want of zeal and concern for the converſion and edification of ſouls: Seeking ourſelves in our public appearances, more than the glory of our bleſſed Maſter, not looking to him for furniture, and depending on his preſence and Spirit for ſucceſs: Not labouring more earneſtly, and preaching more rouzingly

ly for awakening and convincing of ſouls: laying ſtumbling-blocks before hearers, by ſinful ſtrifes, untender walking, and wrong ſteps, whereby they are tempted to abhor the offerings of the Lord, not acting as faithful ſtewards, by rightly dividing the word of truth, and ſpeaking to the different caſes of the converted and unconverted, ſaints and ſinners; and not making it the great end of our ſermons to convince loſt ſinners of their miſery, to exalt a crucified Chriſt as their only remedy, and to lead poor ſouls to him. O that all ranks were brought to acknowledge their guilt, and to lament the hand they have had in ſtopping the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom!

IV. Uſe may be of conſolation to all the friends of Chriſt. Though you have cauſe of fear and trembling, becauſe of the melancholy view you have of the church's caſe at preſent, her groans and grievances, defections, and backſlidings, and the power and ſucceſs of enemies; yet rejoice in the tidings my text brings, "Chriſt muſt increaſe." The church ſhall ariſe and ſhine, her light ſhall come, and the glory of the Lord ſhall riſe upon her. It ſhall not be in the power of all her enemies, though hell and Rome be joined with them, to hinder this increaſe. Antichriſt muſt fall: He hath been in a deadly conſumption theſe 200 years, and will expire at length. Whatever be the oppoſition, Chriſt muſt overcome, triumph, and increaſe at laſt. His church will certainly outlive all her enemies. And though ſometimes ſhe may decreaſe in ſome places, yet we ſhould mind that Chriſt's kingdom is like the ſea, what it loſeth in one place it gaineth in another. If it loſe in Europe, and gain in America, Chriſt loſeth nothing. And tho' his church in our land be brought low, yet her Head and King lives, and many of his worthies have lived and died in the faith of it, that he would not leave her, but return and revive his work in her, with a powerful arm, and ſpreading glory.

V. Uſe, of *exhortation*. And here I exhort and obteſt all ranks, high and low, to do what they can in their ſtations, by their prayers and endeavours, for the coming and increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom, as Chriſt di-

rects, Mat. vi. 10. O how concerned was David this way! Pſal. xxv. 22. and li. 18. And ſo were Aſaph, Iſaiah, Daniel, Nehemiah, Paul, &c. Pſal. lxx. 14. Iſa. lxii. 1. Dan. ix. 16, &c. Neh. ii. 3. Rom. x 1.— Conſider alſo the woes and judgments denounced againſt thoſe who are unconcerned for the intereſt of Chriſt's kingdom, Amos vi. 1, 6. Eſther iv. 14. Likewiſe take a view of the bleſſings which would attend the increaſe of it. The Redeemer's glory would be magnified, the church would become a fruitful mother of many children, and many ſons and daughters would be born to God. Then light would ſpread, knowledge be increaſed, ignorance vaniſh, error be abhorred, ſatan reſtrained, vice forſaken, virtue eſteemed, love and peace cultivated. Then the lives of Chriſtians would ſhine, ſabbaths would be days of heaven, ſermons and ſacraments would be longed for, the friends of Chriſt valued as the excellent ones of the earth, and all wiſdom's ways would be pleaſant and delightful. And what happy times would theſe be?

Queſt. What are thoſe means and endeavours we ſhould uſe for the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom and glory in the world, according to our ſeveral ſtations and capacities?

Ans. 1. Let magiſtrates contribute to this noble end, both by their authority and example, diſcountenancing the immoral and vicious, and putting reſpect upon the virtuous and godly. Let them with zeal and impartiality execute our good laws for ſuppreſſing open vice, ſuch as *drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, profaning of the Lord's name, and of the Lord's day*, &c. Let them in their own lives be patterns to others in juſtice, ſobriety, family religion, and attending upon public ordinances: and no doubt their good examples would have great influence upon thoſe around them.

2. Let miniſters eſpecially lay out themſelves for this increaſe, by making it the great ſcope and end of their ſermons to awaken ſecure ſinners, and lead them to Chriſt; by diligent catechizing of them, and dealing particularly with young perſons in private about their ſouls, and taking great pains with them at their firſt admiſſion

admiſſion to the Lord's table. Let them be careful to keep back the ignorant and ungodly from that holy ordinance; and depend on the miniſtration of the Spirit for all the ſucceſs of their endeavours. Let them beware of licenſing or ordaining any to ſacred functions, who are not of good report for true piety and ſoundneſs; and of impoſing paſtors upon congregations without their conſent or good liking. Let them preach to their flocks by their good lives, as well as their lips; and in all things behave as true friends of the Bridegroom, deſiring (like John Baptiſt) that their bleſſed Maſter may increaſe, though they ſhould decreaſe; that his name may be great, though theirs ſhould ſink to nothing.

3. Let elders in their ſphere contribute all they can to the flouriſhing of Chriſt's kingdom, by their fervent prayers for it, and ſtudying to be exemplary in family religion, ſobriety and holineſs of life: by reproving and admoniſhing of thoſe who walk diſorderly, informing miniſters about them, and faithfully aſſiſting them in the exerciſe of diſcipline, and in ruling and governing of the church.

4. Let teachers of youth aſſiſt in this work, by labouring to inſtill the knowledge of God, and the way of ſalvation through Chriſt, very early into their ſcholars minds; and to perſuade men of the neceſſity and advantage of prayer, a new heart, godlineſs, meekneſs, chaſtity, ſobriety, and juſtice. And likewiſe to train them up in the abhorrence of vice in all its kinds, and of every thing that may prove an inlet or encouragement to it.

5. Let parents and heads of families do what they can to ſet up and increaſe Chriſt's kingdom in their families, by maintaining the worſhip of God in them; ſanctifying the ſabbath in all their dwellings; catechizing and inſtructing children and ſervants, and requiring an account of the ſermons they hear; reproving and curbing ſin wherever it appears; and earneſtly recommending Chriſt and the new birth, prayer, reading of the Bible, and holy living, to all within their gates; and eſpecially to children, when their hearts are

young and tender; for theſe are the hope and ſeed of the next generation. Let us follow the example of the Jews in Nehemiah's time, who repaired the walls of Jeruſalem, every one againſt their own houſes, Neh. iii. 10, &c. If every one would ſweep before their own door, it would ſoon make a clean ſtreet. And if all, whether in public or private ſtations, would diligently apply themſelves to that part of reformation-work that lies neareſt to them, and within their reach, there would ſoon be a happy change among us.

6. Let thoſe whom God hath bleſſed with worldly ſubſtance, employ part of it for the increaſe and enlargement of Chriſt's kingdom, by ſupporting charity-ſchools, and encouraging miniſters, preachers and catechiſts, to travel in dark places of the world, both at home and abroad, for propagating Chriſtian knowledge, and bringing precious ſouls to Jeſus Chriſt: ſurely, there is no better uſe that money can be put to; many of our fellow Chriſtians have done worthily this way before us, and the good effects thereof are notorious; which ſhould excite others to the like acts of charity and beneficence, which have ſuch an evident tendency to ſave periſhing ſouls, and increaſe our dear Redeemer's kingdom and glory.

Object. But (ſay ſome) we are poor and in low ſtations, what can we do for Chriſt's kingdom?

Anſ. There are ſeveral things incumbent on you for this noble end, be what you will.

1. Let every man, whatever his ſtation be, receive the goſpel revelation with a firm unſhaken faith, as the very truth of God, and the way of bringing men to eternal life, which God himſelf hath deviſed. Abhor the impious cavils of infidels againſt it, and receive goſpel-truths with warm love and affection. Love and bleſs God, who, in his infinite love and wiſdom, contrived this ſcheme of ſalvation, and Jeſus Chriſt that executed it, by ſhedding his blood on the croſs. Let each one by faith, put his finger in the print of the nails, and cry with Thomas, "He is my Lord, and my God."

2. Let

2. Let every man ſtudy to recommend this excellent religion to the world, by conforming his practice to its rules, and adorning his life with ſhining holineſs and virtue; and by guarding againſt all injuſtice and diſhoneſty, pride, paſſion, revenge, evil-ſpeaking, and every thing that may ſtumble and beget prejudices in men againſt Chriſtianity, who are too apt to impute the faults of its profeſſors to the religion itſelf. If every profeſſed Chriſtian would contribute, by perſonal reformation, to mend one, then we ſhould all be mended, and the increaſe of Chriſt's kingdom would be glorious.

3. Let every one be ſearching diligently into the time prefixed for the church's being in ſackcloth; viz. the 1260 years. And when (like Daniel) we underſtand by books that the time of finiſhing them is near, let us with him, Dan. ix. 2, 3. ſet our faces unto the Lord God, to ſeek by prayer and ſupplications, with faſting, that he may remove all hindrances, and haſten the time of the church's liberty and increaſe. If you can do no more for it, pour out earneſt prayers to God for fulfilling his promiſes of the downfal of Antichriſt and Mahomet, the inbringing of the Jews, with the fulneſs of the Gentiles: And that he would pour out a ſpirit of mourning and repentance upon the church of Scotland, and other reformed churches, for their decays and backſlidings, put a ſtop to infidelity and error, maintain purity of doctrine and worſhip, remove the cauſes of diviſion and contention, heal breaches, and reſtore peace: And that God may grant a ſpirit of reformation, and of zeal for Chriſt's kingdom, to all men of power and influence, that they may exert themſelves for the enlargement of Chriſt's dominions, and the diminiſhing of ſatan's: and that he would ſend a large effuſion of his Holy Spirit to qualify inſtruments for ſpreading his goſpel through the world.

We are apt to be diſcouraged, when we ſee not likely inſtruments to carry on the Lord's work, and bring about the glorious things he hath promiſed; and to cry, "By whom ſhall Jacob ariſe?" Not minding that God can raiſe up children from ſtones, and inſtruments to

ſerve

ſerve him where they were not expected. Though we be oft at our wit's end, we ſhould never be at our faith's end. God can never be at a loſs to carry on his work, while he hath enough of clay and ſpirit to form inſtruments for his purpoſe. When the arm of the Lord doth once awake for his church, no impediment can ſtop him; he makes out that pleaſant word in Pſal. lxviii. 11. "The Lord gave the word, great was the company of thoſe that publiſhed it." The pouring out of God's Spirit from on high, doth anſwer all objections, overcome difficulties, provide ſupplies, and afford remedies in the moſt deſperate caſes.

O how deſperate like was Luther's attempt in the year 1517, when he, a poor monk, ſet himſelf againſt the torrent of idolatry and corruption that prevailed under Antichriſt at that time! It ſeemed as ridiculous, as if a man had ſet his ſhoulder to a great mountain on purpoſe to remove it. And ſo it was in the reckoning of the wiſeſt of that age; and hence, when Luther opened his deſigns to a great doctor, who diſapproved of the Romiſh corruptions as well as he, he bade Luther retire to his cell, and pray, *Lord have mercy on us;* as if there was no remedy. Yet how wonderfully did the purity of doctrine and worſhip break forth and prevail to amazement, among ſundry nations, ſo as to ſhake the foundations of Antichriſt's throne, and give him a deadly wound, under which he hath been languiſhing ever ſince! There had been ſeveral attempts for reformation made by others long before Luther, as by Wickliff, Huſs, and Jerom of Prague; but all were ineffectual, becauſe God's time of reformation was not then come. But we ſee when once that time cometh, no man is able to hinder it, more than ſtop the ſun from breaking out under a cloud. It becomes, then, all the Lord's ſervants and people, to keep in the way of duty, and wait patiently till his ſet time to favour Zion doth come.

How patiently did Joſhua and the prieſts wait for the downfal of Jericho! Amidſt the inſults of enemies, they continued in their dutiful obedience to God, encompaſſing the city every day, and blowing with trumpets

pets of rams horns, carrying the ark ſtill alongſt with them. This they did ſix days, once every day; and ſeven times upon the ſeventh day. All the ſix days the walls ſtood firm, not a ſtone moved, nor a pinning in it looſed; nor was there any alteration for the moſt part of the ſeventh day, until the evening, when God's ſet time was come; and then, without difficulty, all came tumbling down at once. In like manner, let us perſevere with patience in the way of duty, looking to God, and blowing with the goſpel-trumpet, which by many is deſpiſed as the ſound of a ram's horn: but if we hold on, carrying Chriſt (the bleſt antitype of the ark) along with us, we ſhall come off with triumph at laſt. One thing is ſure, Antichriſt *muſt decreaſe*, and Chriſt *muſt increaſe*. Jericho muſt fall, and Zion muſt be built up. And however dark and cloudy the preſent time be, we are well aſſured from Pſalm cii. *16.* "When the Lord ſhall build up Zion, he ſhall appear in his glory." The Lord in mercy haſten that time in Scotland, and in all parts of the earth, for Chriſt's ſake. Amen. Even ſo come Lord Jeſus. Amen and Amen.

FIVE

FIVE SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE AND AFTER

THE CELEBRATION

OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

SERMON XIII.

Being a Faſt-day's Sermon before the Lord's-Supper.

Of God's Withdrawings from his People, and their Exerciſe under them.

Jerem. xiv. 8. *O the hope of Iſrael, and Saviour thereof in the time of trouble; why ſhouldſt thou be as a ſtranger in the land; and as a way faring man, that turneth aſide to tarry for a night?*

THIS chapter was penned in time of a great dearth in the land of Judah, occaſioned by a grievous drought and want of rain, which fell out about the latter end of king Joſiah his reign: which calamity the prophet pathetically laments, and takes as a token of God's withdrawing his gracious preſence from them; whereupon, ver. 7. he makes a moſt humble confeſſion of ſin, in name of the church, diſclaims any thing of worth or merit in themſelves, and pleads only the glory of God's name.

The prophet's ſcope, in the text and context, is to deprecate God's judgments, and particularly that terri-

ble one, of his withdrawing his preſence from his church and people. "Why, (ſays he, ver. 8.) ſhouldſt thou be as a ſtranger in the land?" and ver 9. "Leave us not." So that he ſeems to paſs from the conſideration of the ſtroke of drought to that of God's withdrawing his preſence from them. Whence we may obſerve, that God's people dread and deprecate the withdrawing of his gracious preſence, more than the removal of all their creature-comforts, or any other judgment whatſoever.

More particularly, in the text we have, 1. The gracious titles he gives to God, as the grounds on which he pleads for his gracious favour and preſence, "O the hope of Iſrael!" i. e. the object of Iſrael's hope, whoſe word and promiſe is the only foundation of their hope: "the Saviour of Iſrael in the time of trouble," i. e. the helper and deliverer of Iſrael in former times of diſtreſs. And then, from theſe grounds he doth, in the ſecond place, humbly plead and expoſtulate the matter with God in a twofold queſtion: 1. "Why ſhouldſt thou be as a ſtranger in the land?" i. e. Why ſhouldſt thou behave to us at this time as a ſtranger, in keeping at a diſtance from us, and inclining, as it were, to drop all acquaintance and correſpondence with us: 2. "Why ſhouldſt thou be as a way-faring man, that turns aſide to tarry for a night?" i. e. Why ſhouldſt thou ſeem unconcerned about our intereſt and welfare, like a traveller that comes into an inn, and never inquires into the affairs of it? Or why ſhouldſt thou pay ſuch ſhort and tranſient viſits, as if thou waſt weary of us, and ready to depart for good and all.

Doc. That as ſometimes it pleaſeth God to withdraw himſelf, and behave as a ſtranger to his church and people; ſo there is nothing in the world that will be ſuch matter of exerciſe and trouble to the ſerious ſeekers of God, as ſuch a diſpenſation.

As this is plainly founded on the text, ſo alſo it is evident, from many other places of ſcripture, and the practice of the ſaints therein recorded, Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9. Pſal. xiii. 1, 2. Pſal. xxvii. 7.

In

In handling this doctrine, I ſhall obſerve the following method: 1. Premiſe ſome things for the better underſtanding of it. 2. Shew when it may be ſaid, that the Lord withdraws from, and behaves as a ſtranger to his people. 3. For what reaſons and grounds he uſeth to do ſo. 4. When it may be ſaid, that people are duly exerciſed about this melancholy diſpenſation. 5. Whence it is, that this diſpenſation is matter of ſuch exerciſe and trouble to the ſerious ſeekers of God. 6. I ſhall make ſome improvement of the whole.

I begin with the *firſt*; viz. To premiſe ſome things for the better underſtanding of this doctrine, and for preventing miſtakes.

1. However God doth at any time withdraw from his people, yet we muſt remember, he never takes away his loving kindneſs from them, Iſa. liv. 10.

2. However God may withdraw the ſenſible and comforting influences of his Spirit from his people; yet he never withdraws his Spirit from them, as to his real preſence and inhabitation for the preſervation and ſupport of their ſpiritual life, John xiv. 17.

3. God's withdrawings from his people are never either total or final, but only in part, and for a time, Heb. xiii. 5. Iſa. liv. 7, 8. God never leaves his people altogether, but is ſtill graciouſly preſent with them one way or other; if not in reſpect of comfort, yet he is with them in reſpect of grace, if not in a way of quickening, yet ſtill in a way of ſupport; if not in enlivening their affections, yet it may be in enlightening their underſtandings; if not giving ſenſible enjoyments, yet, in giving hungry deſires: ſo that the Lord is ſtill with them ſome way or other.

4. There are various degrees of God's withdrawing himſelf from his people; with ſome of them the day is only dark and cloudy; with others it is twilight, neither dark nor light; but with many it is night: with ſome, neither the ſun nor ſtars have for many days appeared; but with others (according to their apprehenſion) it is a total eclipſe.

5. We ſhould diſtinguiſh betwixt God's withdrawing from his people in point of comfort, and his withdraw-

ing in point of grace. These two do not still go together: for the first may be where the second is not. A believer may be deprived of the shinings of God's love and favour, when yet faith may be lively, desires strong, the heart tender, and grace in a vigorous condition; but oft-times God withdraws in point of grace, as well as in point of comfort: I do not mean in respect of the habit of grace, for this can never be rooted out, where it is once planted; but only in respect of the exercise and some particular degrees of grace: These may be lost, so as the soul becomes weak, and sometimes very feeble and languid in duty; the breath grows cold, the pulse beats low, "and the things that remain seem ready to die," Rev. iii. 2.

II. The second thing proposed, was to shew when it may be said that the Lord withdraws, and behaves as a stranger to his people.

1. When he withholds his wonted acts of kindness from them; sees them in trouble, and steps not in for their relief, as in former times. Of this the church complains, Isa. lxiii. 15. "Where is thy zeal and thy strength? The sounding of thy bowels, and thy mercies toward me, are they now restrained?" He suffered their enemies to gather strength, to rise up and oppress them, and bring them very low; and did not seem to regard their cry, nor shew his mercy or power in helping them; but withdrew his hand, and behaved as a stranger that was not concerned about them. It was on this account that Gideon reckoned God to be withdrawn from Israel, when the angel of the Lord appeared to him, Judg. vi. 12. and said, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." But Gideon was so much taken up with the distressed case of the church in general, that he waves the consideration of his own particular case, and says, ver. 13. "Oh my Lord; if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of?" *q. d.* If the Lord were not withdrawn, and become as a stranger to us, surely he would not have suffered the Midianites to oppress us so sore and so long, without appearing

appearing for our help. In like manner oftimes reaſons a poor diſcouraged believer; If the Lord were not withdrawn, why ſhould my old luſts (which I once thought were both killed and buried) riſe up and trouble me? Alas! I am left to ſtruggle againſt them alone, and "iniquities prevail againſt me;" I ſtrive to ſtem the tide, but it grows the more: "How long ſhall the enemy be exalted over me?"

2. When the Lord threatens to remove the ſigns and ſymbols of his preſence from his people, viz. pure ordinances and ſacraments; when he lets enemies combine, and carry on their plots for this purpoſe; when our ſprings are in hazard of being ſtopt or poiſoned, and we put to ſeek our "ſpiritual bread with the peril of our lives, becauſe of the ſword of the wilderneſs," Lam. v. 9. This hath been the lot of God's people in this land; now indeed we get our bread at an eaſier rate, but alas! we do not prize it, nor grow by it. May not God be provoked then to withdraw it, or ſend us to the wilderneſs again to ſeek it.

3. When though the Lord continues pure ordinances and ſacraments with his people, yet denies the wonted bleſſing and benefit thereof to them, yea, blaſts them: according to that ſad word, Mal. ii. 2. "If ye will not hear and lay it to heart, I will even curſe your bleſſings, yea, I have curſed them already." This we fear is the caſe of many; they have the word and ſacraments in purity and plenty, but do not find them bleſt; God's Spirit doth not concur with them, and their ſouls do not thrive under them. Surely the Lord behaves as a ſtranger to our aſſemblies, when miniſters are ſtraitened in preaching, and people are ſtraitened in hearing; when we that are ſent to you, feel much coldneſs on our own hearts, and have a number of cold hearts to deal with, and a live-coal is not brought from the altar to kindle the fire.

4. When the Lord frowns on his people in the courſe of his providence, denies them outward mercies, and denounces temporal ſtrokes and calamities, yea, actually brings them on, whereby his people are brought very low;

low; they look to God for pity, but no relief comes; their diſtreſs is long continued, and their trials lengthened out. So when Zion's captivity was prolonged, ſhe cried out, Iſa. xlix. 14. "The Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me."

5. The Lord behaves as a ſtranger to his people, when he truſts them with dumb and ſilent rods; trials whereof they underſtand not the language, and whereby they reap no benefit. This was the caſe of God's people, Iſa. lvii. 17. "For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." Though God's rod ſhould have let him to ſee his ſin, and lay to heart the cauſe of the controverſy, yet he took no notice of it, but went on in his former courſe: Many, though God's hand be lifted up, they will not ſee. They are not bettered by his diſpenſations.

6. When the Lord denies acceſs to his people in duty, and breaks off his wonted correſpondence with them: They come to God's ordinary tryſting places with his people, ordinances both public and private, but he is not there; they ſeek him, but ſtill they miſs him, ſo as they are put to cry with that holy man, Job xxiii. 3. "O that I knew where I might find him." O that I knew the place, the duty, the ſermon, the ſacrament, where I might find him; there I would go and ſeek him; I try prayer, (ſaith the poor ſoul) but that brings me not to him; "for when I cry out and ſhout, he ſhutteth out my prayer," as Lam. iii. 8. Alas! I get not acceſs to God as formerly, he carries now to me as an alien; for when I come and knock, I find nothing but a ſhut door, and a ſilent God. In a word, the Lord withdraws, and behaves as a ſtranger to his people, when he withholds the manifeſtations of his countenance, the operations of his Spirit, and the ſpecial communications of light and life, which he uſeth to allow to them that love him.

III. The next thing was to enquire into the grounds and reaſons, why the Lord deals ſo with his people. I grant, the Lord may thus withdraw from them out of his

his abſolute ſovereignty; but commonly he doth it for the correction of ſin, Iſa. lix. 2. As,

1. When they are guilty of groſs ſins and ſcandalous outbreakings, ſuch as caſt a reproach upon religion, and the good ways of the Lord, Iſa. i. 13, 14. This is plain in David's caſe, ſee 2 Sam. xii. 14. compared with Pſal. li. 11.

2. When they turn earthly-minded and prefer the delights of ſenſe to precious Chriſt, then he withdraws, Iſa. lvii. 17. They that have a ſtrong reliſh for the fleſh pots of Egypt, are not fit to taſte the hidden manna. When the Gadarenes came that length as to prefer their ſwine to Chriſt's preſence, he turned his back, and departed from their coaſts, Matth. viii. 28.

3. When we turn ſlothful and formal in duty, and do not ſtir up ourſelves to ſeek God's face, then he withdraws, as is plain from Iſa. lxiv. 7. Cant. iii. 1. If you put God off with bodily exerciſe, he will put you off with empty ordinances and dry breaſts: If you ſerve him not with your ſpirits, he will deprive you of his Spirit. Wherefore, if you would have the Lord be with you, ye muſt ſhake off ſloth, "Ariſe and be doing:" according to 1 Chron. xxii. 16.

4. When we neglect or ſlight the Mediator; by whom we have acceſs and nearneſs to God, we provoke the Lord to withdraw and turn a ſtranger to us. And this we do, 1. When we do not look to Chriſt for ſtrength to perform duty, but truſt to our own ſtrength for doing it. 2. When we make a ſaviour of our duties, and put them in Chriſt's room: And this we are prone to, eſpecially when we attain to any freedom or enlargement in duty. All is well now, think we, God is well pleaſed, this will render us acceptable to him, and atone for former guilt; and thus the glorious Mediator is forgot, and the idol ſelf is exalted in his place; which is moſt diſpleaſing to God.

5. When we miſcarry under ſignal manifeſtations and pledges of God's loving kindneſs; turn unthankful, remiſs, and untender in our walk, after he hath taken us into his preſence-chamber, and ſet us under the banner of his love. We are told how Solomon ſadly miſcarried,

miſcarried, " even after the Lord had appeared to him twice ;" for which the Lord was provoked to withdraw from him, 1 Kings xi. 9. And has not the Lord appeared to ſome of you, at communion-ſeaſons, oftener than once or twice, and yet grievouſly have they miſcarried after all ? Great cauſe have ye to mourn on this account, and beg that the Lord may not plead a laſting controverſy with you for it.

6. When we ſin under, and after great afflictions or trials appointed to reclaim us, God is provoked to leave us, Iſa. lvii. 17. Has not God ſmitten ſome of you, and brought you into the furnace, ſo that ye melted under his hand ? But when in pity he delivered you again, ye ſoon forgot his dealings, and turned to your old ways. Is it any wonder that he frown and behave as a ſtranger to you ?

7. God is provoked to leave us, when we do not entertain the motions and kindly touches of his Spirit on our hearts ; the ſpouſe neglected theſe, ſo that her beloved withdrew, turned a ſtranger to her, and it coſt her much travel and ſorrow ere ſhe got his countenance again, Cant. v 2, 3, 6, 7.

8. When we grow hardened and impenitent under provocations, ſo as we have neither a due ſenſe of our own ſins, nor of the ſins of the land we live in, Hoſ. v. 15. " I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offences, and ſeek my face." Ah ! was there ever more guilt lying on a land, and leſs feeling of it, than amongſt us at this day ?

IV. The *fourth* thing was to ſhew when it may be ſaid that people are rightly exerciſed under ſuch a diſpenſation, as this of the Lord's withdrawing, and behaving as a ſtranger to them.

1. We may be ſaid to be rightly exerciſed under it, when we are truly ſenſible of our loſs, and of our ſins, as the procuring cauſe thereof ; and hence are brought heartily to mourn and " lament after the Lord," as the prophet doth in the text and context, and as Iſrael did in the days of Samuel, 1 Sam. vii. 2.

2. When we place all our comfort and happineſs in the favour and preſence of God, and are unſatisfied with all

all other comforts without this, count all worldly things but loſs and dung; look on ſun, moon, health, wealth, honours, pleaſures, houſes, relations, yea, life and breath, as moſt empty and comfortleſs things without God; ſo did the prophet in the text, when he addreſſes himſelf with this title, "O the hope of Iſrael!" *q. d.* All our hope is in thee, and we are poor, miſerable, and hopeleſs creatures without thee; and ſo did the Pſalmiſt, when he ſaith, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee."

3. When we are at pains to engage our whole hearts, and all the powers and faculties of our ſouls, to ſeek after a withdrawing God: "With my whole heart have I ſought thee," ſaith David, Pſal. cxix. 10. And becauſe our hearts are deceitful, and ready to ſtart aſide from this work, we ſhould be laying ties and engagements on them to be ſincere and fervent about this work, for God takes ſpecial notice of ſuch who do ſo; Jer. xxx. 21. "Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me?"

4. When we diligently lay hold on all opportunities, and uſe all appointed means for finding an abſent God; like the ſpouſe that ſought her beloved about all the city, both in the *ſtreets and broad ways*, Cant. iii. 2. In all duties and ordinances, both private and public, our ſouls ſhould *follow hard after him*, and purſue him cloſely, (as it were) from one ordinance to another, Pſal. lxiii. 8.

5. When we wreſtle with him in prayer for his gracious return to us, and fill our mouths with arguments in pleading with him, as the prophet doth in the text and context: 1. He pleads the glory of his name, "Do it for thy name's ſake." 2. He pleads their hopeleſs and helpleſs caſe without him, who was the fountain of all help and comfort: "O the hope of Iſrael and Saviour thereof." 3. He pleads the former experiences they had of his kindneſs to them in their helpleſs condition: "O Saviour of Iſrael in the time of trouble." 4. He pleads his power; it was very eaſy for him to relieve them, whatever ſtraits they were in:

"Why ſhouldſt thou be as a man aſtoniſhed, as a mighty man that cannot ſave?" 5. He pleads the outward ſymbols and pledges of his preſence he had given them, his temple, his ark, and oracles: "Thou, O Lord, art in the midſt of us." 6. He pleads the covenant-relation they ſtood in to him: "We are called by thy name." Upon all which accounts, we beſeech thee leave us not.

6. We are duly exerciſed under God's withdrawings, when we hold on in our cloſe purſuits after him, notwithſtanding of diſcouragements and diſappointments, like Mary Magdalene, John xx. who would not leave the ſepulchre when others left it, but ſearched it over and over again, yet waited on with patience, ſtill looking for him, till at length ſhe found her Beloved. Thus was the Pſalmiſt exerciſed, Pſal. xxv. 15, 16. "Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord.—Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am deſolate and afflicted."

7. When we are unſatisfied with the beſt means and ordinances, unleſs we find God in them: David was not content with his enjoying the tabernacle, the ark, ſacrifices, the paſſover, and others of God's pure ordinances: but, in midſt of all, "his heart and fleſh cried out for the living God," Pſal. lxxxiv. 2. Hypocrites, if they have the outward means, are well ſatisfied; for God's preſence and abſence is all one to them: but ſincere believers will not be put off ſo; if God be not in the ordinances, nothing can pleaſe them, not the moſt powerful ſermons, though an angel were to preach them; nor the moſt lively communions, though a glorified apoſtle ſhould come and diſpenſe them. The abſence of God is ſuch a great want to them, that nothing in heaven or earth can fill up, but himſelf.

V. The fifth thing is to ſhew, whence it is that the Lord's withdrawing and behaving as a ſtranger to his people, is ſuch a matter of exerciſe and trouble to them.

1. Becauſe of the incomparable ſweetneſs and advantage they enjoy in his gracious preſence, while they have it; for this is the ſum and compend of all bleſſings, and hath all good things wrapt up in it. The divine preſence brings light and life, health and ſtrength, peace,

peace, and comfort, yea, complete ſatisfaction to the precious ſoul that doth enjoy it; no wonder then, that the people of God ſhould be ſo much concerned for the want of it; for then they may cry out with Micah, and with juſt ground too, "They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?" Judg. xviii. 24.

II. Becauſe of the effects and conſequents of God's withdrawings from the ſoul; which being very ſad and melancholy, are matter of great exerciſe and trouble to God's people: as for inſtance, 1. There follows uſually on it, a great darkneſs upon the ſpirit; as, when the ſun goes down, darkneſs covers the face of the earth; ſo when God withdraws, thick clouds do veil the face of the underſtanding, and the whole ſoul; ſo that the poor diſconſolate ſoul is bewildered, knows not his way, nor what courſe to take, but is made to complain, as in Lam. iii. 2. "He hath brought me into darkneſs, and not into light." Alas! ſaith he, I know not where I am, nor how it is with me; I know not God's mind nor will towards me; I ſee not any comfortable ſign, neither know I the time how long; I meet with many dark providences, dark ordinances, dark communions, all is dark to me.

2. Not only darkneſs, but much deadneſs and ſtupidity alſo ſeizes upon the deſerted ſoul. Why are our ſpirits ſo dead in prayer, in hearing, and ſo dead in communicating? Is it not becauſe the Lord is withdrawn? What theſe two ſiſters ſaid to Chriſt, John xi. "Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died;" may be well ſaid by ſuch a poor ſoul, Lord, if thou hadſt been here preſent in ſuch a duty, in ſuch a ſermon or communion, my heart had not been ſo dead; for why, as Moſes ſaith, Deut. xxx. 22. "He is thy life;" ſo when our life withdraws, we are dead, and all things are dead to us.

3. There follows alſo an unſpiritedneſs and diſability for duty: the ſoul hath neither heart nor hand for prayer, for reading, hearing, communicating, meditation, ſelf-examination, or any duty. Deſerted Heman ſaith, "I am as a man that hath no ſtrength," Pſalm lxxxviii. 4. David's complaint is much the ſame, Pſal.

xl. 12. "Mine iniquities have taken hold on me, I am not able to look up." His ſpiritual ſtrength was ſo waſted, that he was ſcarce able either to ſpeak or look to God. Now, what is the cauſe of all our weakneſs and incapacity for duty? Oh! the Lord is withdrawn. It is a true word our Saviour ſaith, John xv. 5. "Without me ye can do nothing." It were happy for us, that we were moſt ſenſible of this truth; for we are moſt apt to truſt to our own ſtrength, and think ſtill we can do well enough for ourſelves: like Samſon, when he had ſinned away both his God and his ſtrength, yet he went forth to ſhake himſelf as at other times, "but wiſt not that the Lord had departed from him." So many are are inſenſible of the Lord's departure, they go to communions, and think to ſhake themſelves, as at other times; but, oh! there is a benumbedneſs and weakneſs that has ſeized on their ſpirits, they cannot now lift up their ſouls at his table.

4. There uſually follows, on God's withdrawing, great witheredneſs and barenneſs on the ſouls of his people; their leaf fades, their fruit drops, and they quickly turn like the mountains of Gilboa, on which there is neither dew nor rain," John xv. 6. "If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered." It is his gracious preſence only that can make us "fat and flouriſhing in the courts of our God."

5. We become expoſed and liable to manifold dangers and enemies; for when God withdraws, our defence withdraws too. Hence Moſes comforts Iſrael againſt their enemies, Num. xiv. 9. "Ye need not fear them (ſaith he) for their defence is departed from them, the Lord is with us." The Lord's preſence is his people's defence againſt all the aſſaults of their enemies, whether from within or from without, againſt the power of their luſts, the policy of the devil, and cruelty of the wicked: but if their fence be removed, they are expoſed to them all.

6. Another effect, which is matter of ſad exerciſe, is, great trouble and anxiety of mind for former unkiddneſs and ingratitude to God. Hence the Pſalmiſt ſaith, Pſal. lxxvii. 3. "I remembered God, and was troubled." Formerly he had remembered God, and was comforted;

comforted; his meditation of him was ſweet, but now it was far otherwiſe: Oh! ſays he, I now remember my unkindneſs to him that was ſo good to me; my conſcience upbraids me for my unſuitable carriage: "Is this thy kindneſs to thy friend?" Where are all thy former purpoſes and reſolutions? Thy promiſes and vows made at ſacraments? Are they all come to this? Oh! thou haſt ſinned thy God and friend away from thee! It was the thoughts hereof that brake Peter's heart, and made him weep ſo bitterly.

7. There follows on it very melancholy and unwelcome thoughts of death and judgment. When God is preſent with the believer, he can ſay as in Pſal. xxiii. 4. "Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." But Oh! it is melancholy to think of going through that valley without him, and of appearing before him while he frowns, and behaves as a ſtranger or enemy to us.

8. Sometimes there follows a revived ſenſe of wrath, old wounds begin to open and bleed afreſh; the deſerted ſoul is driven back to the foot of mount Sinai, and begins to hear its thunders and curſes renewed, though he once thought they had been all ſilenced by the blood of Chriſt. Thus it was with Heman, Pſal. lxxxviii. 7. "Thy wrath lieth hard upon me," &c.

Laſtly, The fears of utter rejection is another conſequent, that oft proves matter of ſad exerciſe to the deſerted ſoul. Alas! I fear my cauſe ſhall never be better, that my ſky ſhall never break, nor my clouds diſſipate; that I ſhall never recover God's preſence again, but be baniſhed eternally from it; ſo with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxvii. 9, 10. "Has God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies?" And Pſal. cxix. 8. "O forſake me not utterly."

APPPLICATION.

Uſe I. Of *Information*. 1. Hence we may be informed, that there are but few true ſeekers of God among us, ſeeing there are few to whom God's withdrawing

drawing is matter of much exerciſe or trouble; few mourning on this account, like the prophet, and crying, "Why art thou ſuch a ſtranger to my ſoul?" Many are troubled for other trifling loſſes, but few that can ſay with David, Pſal. xxx. 7. "Thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled."

2. We may ſee the miſery of thoſe who are far from God now, and are like to be deprived of his preſence for ever, Pſal. lxxiii. 27. Unrenewed perſons deſire not God's preſence here, but ſay to him, "Depart from us," John xxi. 14. and alas! their choice is their judgment, and ſhall be ſo for ever; for the Judge's ſentence againſt them will be, "Depart from me," &c. If the Epheſians ſorrowed moſt of all for that parting word of Paul to them, "Ye ſhall ſee my face no more," Acts xx. 38. how much more will ſuch a word from Chriſt's mouth at the laſt day be piercing and heart-breaking to the ungodly for ever?

3. How ſad muſt the caſe of thoſe be, from whom God withdraws, not to return again? The Spirit of God comes, and ſtrives for a time with many; but, when reſiſted and grieved, he goes away; and when once he goes away from an unconverted ſoul, he ſeldom returns to ſtrive any more. When the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, he came not again, but an evil ſpirit in his place, 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

4. Believers ſhould not conclude that God has caſt them off, becauſe he is a ſtranger to them for a time; for this hath been the lot of the deareſt of God's children, yea, even of his own beloved Son himſelf, when in this world.

Uſe II. Of *Reproof.* 1. To thoſe who are ſo great ſtrangers to religion, and the ſtate of their own ſouls, that they know not what God's preſence or abſence is; and ſo indifferent are many about this matter, they never enquired to this day, whether God be a ſtranger or a friend to their ſouls.

2. To thoſe believers, towards whom God may be behaving as a ſtranger, and yet they are inſenſible of it. They are become ſo unwatchful, and ſo much charmed with the delights of ſenſe, and their ſpiritual ſenſes

ſo

ſo dull, that they are fallen into Samſon's condition, Judges xvi. 20. "He wiſt not that the Lord had departed from him."

3. To thoſe who, though they be ſenſible of the Lord's withdrawings, yet are not duly affected therewith: It is not matter of ſerious ſoul-exerciſe to them, as it was to Jeremiah in the text, and to Job, Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9. and to the Iſraelites, 1 Sam. vii. 2. "Who lamented after the Lord."

4. To thoſe who are ſo far from being ſuitably exerciſed and affected with the Lord's withdrawings from them, that they are ſtill ſinning him farther away; by their formality in duty, untenderneſs of walk, ſlighting of the Spirit's motions, and venturing on ſins againſt light. O believer! "is this thy kindneſs to thy friend? Doſt thou thus requite the Lord?" We do not marvel to ſee perſecutors, and haters of God, driving him away, or to ſee Chriſt receiving wounds from his enemies: but O! it is ſad that precious Chriſt ſhould get ſuch wounds in the houſe of his friends.

Uſe III. Of *exhortation* to two ſorts of perſons. 1. To thoſe who are ſtrangers to God, and know nothing of his preſence. 2. To thoſe who have known it, but he is become a ſtranger to them.

As to the *firſt ſort*, I exhort you, in the name of the Lord, to bethink yourſelves, and conſider your miſery in this ſtate; for "lo, they that are far from God ſhall periſh." It is the character of thoſe who are in a loſt ſtate, to be "without God in the world." Now, your miſery, while ſuch, is inexpreſſible. 1. You are utterly unfit to come to the Lord's table; for "what communion can there be betwixt light and darkneſs!" Or, betwixt thoſe that have hitherto been ſtrangers and enemies to one another. Remember, it is only a feaſt for friends: ſtrangers to God are debarred. 2. Your ſtate is moſt uncomfortable; the ſun hath never riſen upon you; God's face hath never ſhined upon you; it is ſtill dark night with you, and you ſit "in the region and ſhadow of death." 3. You are under the dominion of ſatan, the prince and ruler of darkneſs. 4. You are under the heavy clouds of God's wrath and indignation. 5. You

ſit conſtantly on the very borders of hell. 6. O ſinner! conſider what a day of darkneſs and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkneſs, a dying hour will prove to thee. When thy ſoul is ſtepping forth into another world, how ready will it be to ſhrink back, and ſay, How ſhall I appear before that God, who has always been a ſtranger to me, and with whom I never had the leaſt acquaintance! Can I look for any thing but a frowning Judge, and a fearful ſentence? O ſtrangers, come and "acquaint yourſelves with God now," accept of his offers of mercy, and "be at peace" with him through Chriſt; and "thereby ſhall good come unto you."

Exhort. II. To thoſe who have had acquaintance with God, but he is become a ſtranger to them. O poor ſoul, be ſuitably weighted and affected with this diſpenſation; let it be matter of exerciſe to thee upon a faſt-day before the communion: it will be a heartleſs and fruitleſs communion, if God continue as a ſtranger to thee; therefore be not eaſy under his withdrawings.

Conſid. 1. Your ſouls grievances can never be removed while God keeps at a diſtance from you; but they will ſtill be growing greater: as for inſtance, While he is a ſtranger, you cannot have light for your darkneſs, but darkneſs will be increaſing; you cannot have life for your deadneſs, but you will ſtill be growing deader in ſpiritual things; you cannot have appetite for your food, but you will always be turning the more indifferent about it; you cannot have protection from your enemies, but you will ſtill be brought the more under their power. Things will ſtill be growing worſe, the longer God is a ſtranger to thy ſoul.

2. Ordinances can neither be pleaſant nor profitable to thee, while God is a ſtranger to thy ſoul; you cannot ſee any beauty in them, while God is abſent; for without the Lord's preſence, ordinances are dead, and a dead thing can have no beauty. It is his preſence that puts a luſtre on ordinances, and makes them ſhine, ſo as to confirm the friends of the goſpel, and make enemies aſhamed of their oppoſition. It is his preſence that

that puts life in communions, and life in communicants, and causes them to prefer a day in "God's courts to a thousand elsewhere." It is his presence that makes ordinances fruitful, and his people's souls to thrive under them. O! why have you such lean souls and barren hearts under ordinances! It is, because the Lord is a stranger to them. Would you have your food blest, gospel-seasons fruitful, and your souls under the influence thereof, like watered gardens? Then seek the Lord's presence, 1 Cor. iii. 7. "It is not he that planteth, nor he that watereth, but God that gives the increase."

Quest. Seeing God is setting a solemn tryst with us at this occasion, and it highly concerneth us to make ready to meet with him: How shall we be exercised on this fast day, so as to get distance removed, and breaches made up, that God may not be a stranger to us on the feast-day?

Ans. I shall give you some advices, and draw to a close.

1. Make no harsh construction of God's dealings with your souls, whatever they be, but justify him; leave your complaints upon yourselves, and blame your sins, that separate betwixt you and your God, Isa. lix. 2. We have a challenge from God that may soon silence all our murmuring, Jer. ii. 17. "Hast thou not procured this to thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God?"

2. Be still restless, dissatisfied, and uneasy in your minds, till the distance and estrangement be removed: and be expressing your uneasiness by frequent sighs, complaints, and lamentations after God; sit as a widow in his absence, and let none have your love but him alone; refuse all other comforters, till he himself return; imitate the church's practice, Lam. i. 16. "For these things I weep, mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me."

3. Search diligently for the cause of the Lord's e-

ſtrangement from you, as the Pſalmiſt did, Pſal. lxxvii. 6. "I communed with mine own heart, my ſpirit made diligent ſearch." O! where is the idol? What is the ſin that hath been the Achan in the camp, and provoked God to turn his back? And aſſoon as you find it out, ſee that you caſt out the accurſed thing. Let not thine eye pity, neither do thou ſpare it; for it has taken thy Lord away from thee. If thou canſt not find it, then go humbly to God, and cry with Job, "Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me," Job x. 2. Lord, what is the evil, the ſin or luſt which thou rebukeſt, and for which thou pleadeſt the controverſy? Have I quenched thy Spirit? Have I neglected duty? Was I formal in communicating, or unthanful for former intimations of thy love? "Lord, what I ſee not, teach thou me; make me to know my tranſgreſſions, and my ſin."

4. Seek to be deeply humbled for every evil and ſin that you are convinced of; and particularly, for the heinous aggravations of them; ſay, O Lord! I am guilty in thy ſight; I have ſinned againſt more light, more mercies, more vows, and more proofs of thy loving-kindneſs, than others: I have gratified Satan, hardened the wicked, reproached religion, and diſhonoured God more by my ſins, than others do; ſo that thou mayeſt juſtly frown on me, and make the ſolemn day, which will be a day of feaſting, rejoicing, and gladneſs to thy children, a day of darkneſs, gloomineſs, and diſtreſs to me.

5. Plead by faith the Redeemer's blood, for removing the eſtrangement, and bringing thy ſoul nigh to God; for nothing elſe can do it, according to Eph. ii. 13. ſay, Lord, though I deſerve not to taſte of thy ſupper, but to meet with a frown inſtead of a ſmile, a breach inſtead of a bleſſing, a cup of wrath inſtead of the cup of the New Teſtament; yet behold the blood of my Surety, and be merciful to me. Lord! I have broke all thy commands; but has not my Surety fulfilled them all? I have indeed affronted thy juſtice; but has not my Surety ſatisfied it? I have deſerved thy wrath;

wrath; but he has endured it. Remember not what I have done againſt thee, but what he hath done and ſuffered for me; and let me be accepted in him who is thy beloved Son.

6. While God carries as a ſtranger to thee, be not thou a ſtranger to the throne of grace, but continue inſtant in prayer for the return of his gracious preſence; plead the great need you have of it, and the helpleſs caſe you are in without it. Beg, however he deal with you now, that he may not be a ſtranger to you on the feaſt-day. Say, "Lord, if thy preſence go not with me, carry me not hence. What will a communion-feaſt avail me, without communion with thyſelf in it? I go not there for bread and wine, but I go to ſee Jeſus: and what wilt thou give me, if I go from thy table Chriſtleſs? O let Chriſt appear and be made known to me in the breaking of bread. Let me enjoy thy lightſome and reviving company in this ſtate of pilgrimage and trouble. Deſcend into my heart by the influences of thy grace, and quickenings of thy Spirit, and let me aſcend unto thee, by the breathings of faith, love, and deſire. Lord, grant the requeſt of an importunate petitioner, and come over the mountains of my guilt. Lord, ſtand not at a diſtance behind the wall, but ſhew thyſelf through the lettice of thy ordinance, and let me ſee the goings of my God and my King in the ſanctuary. Oh! let me not go away empty from an inexhauſtible treaſure, cold from the ſun, dry from the fountain, hungry, ſad, and comfortleſs from a feaſt of love. But O! let me meet with my Saviour there, ſee his face, and hear his voice; and let me come from his table with my pardon ſealed, my corruptions ſubdued, my graces quickened, my heart enlarged, and my ſoul refreſhed and encouraged to run in the ways of thy commandments, and ſo inſeparably united to thee, that no temptation may be ever able to diſſolve the union."

Object. O! ſaith ſome poor ſoul, I fear all my endeavours will be in vain; for I have communicated unworthily before; I have ſhed the blood of Chriſt, and ſinned againſt light; ſo that I doubt and fear that my day of grace is paſt, and I am caſt out of God's ſight.

Anſ. However dark your caſe be, yet ſurely it is no darker than Jonas was in the whale's belly; who, tho' he never read or heard of any in ſuch diſtreſs: yet when he is concluding, I am caſt out of God's ſight, he aims at a believing look to God in Chriſt, "Yet will I look again toward thy holy temple," Jon. ii. 4. Mind alſo Abraham's caſe, though he was an hundred years old, and his body as good as dead, yet he believed in God that raiſed the dead; yea, he believed, and hoped againſt hope. Lord help us to imitate him. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

A Preparation-Sermon before the Lord's Supper.

The happineſs of being in Covenant with God.

Pſalm. cxliv. 15. *Happy is that people whoſe God is the Lord.*

THERE is nothing in the world that is ſo much talked of, and leſs underſtood, than the buſineſs of a happy life. All the world is in queſt of happineſs, ſome expecting to find it in this, and ſome in the other thing. The worldling looks for it in riches, the philoſopher in knowledge, the ambitious man in honours, and the voluptuous man in pleaſures. But how miſerably are they miſtaken! they ſeek happineſs from the wrong airth; from things that can never ſuit the wants, nor ſatisfy the vaſt deſires of the immortal ſoul. True Chriſtians are the only wiſe men in the world, for they ſeek happineſs where indeed it is to be found, viz. in the enjoyment of God who is the centre of bliſs. And they who attain to this, muſt ſurely be the happy men, for

for the Spirit of God declares them ſo in my text: "Happy is that people whoſe God is the Lord."

In this pſalm, the royal Pſalmiſt doth bleſs and magnify the Lord for the ſignal favours and mercies he had received from him; and from his former gracious experiences, he is encouraged to addreſs God for future mercies, both to himſelf and his kingdom: particularly, he prays for deliverance from public enemies, and the manifold calamities of war; for the eſtabliſhing of peace and tranquility, and for the proſperity of the nation; for the flouriſhing of their families and children, and for the increaſe of their flocks and cattle: and, in a word, that his people might abound in peace and plenty. Then he pauſes, and makes a reflection upon the nation's proſperous circumſtances, which he had prayed for: "Happy is the people that is in ſuch a caſe;" happy they, who have ſuch temporal proſperity and abundance, who have no want in their families, nor complaining in their ſtreets. This is the judgment of the fleſh, and the opinion of moſt men. But the Pſalmiſt preſently corrects himſelf, and retracts his former judgment, and prefers the judgment of faith, to that of ſenſe: yea, rather, "Happy is that people, whoſe God is the Lord." As if he had ſaid, "The former eſtate is indeed very deſirable for a nation or people; but Iſrael or the people of God, their true happineſs doth not conſiſt in theſe things that are common to others with them; but only in this peculiar privilege, that the great JEHOVAH, who is the Lord of heaven and earth, is their God by covenant and ſpecial relation. That this God is their God, and they have a ſpecial intereſt in his love and favour, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace. Whatever portion ſuch have in the world's good things, ſurely they are happy; and let others have what they will, if they want this covenant-relation, they are certainly unhappy and miſerable; which they can never be that have it, want what they will; ſeeing the having an intereſt in God as ours, makes up the want of all other things; for all bleſſedneſs and happineſs is included here.

here. " Bleſſed and happy is that people whoſe God is the Lord."

Doct. That it is the greateſt happineſs we can poſſibly attain unto, to be in covenant with God, and to have God for our God.

David was ſtill of this opinion through the whole courſe of his life, Pſal. xvi. 5, 6. Pſal. xxiii. 1, 2. And he ſees no cauſe to alter it at his death; for, among his laſt words, he declares, that this ſweet covenant-relation was " all his ſalvation, and all his deſire," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

The method I purpoſe for handling this ſubject, ſhall be,

1. To enquire when it may be ſaid, that a perſon or people are in covenant with God, and have a ſpecial intereſt in him as theirs.

2. What is imported in this great privilege, to have God for our God.

3. How this privilege appears to be the top of our happineſs.

4. Make improvement of the whole.

I begin with the *firſt*, When it may be ſaid, that a perſon or people are in covenant with God, &c.

And for clearing this point the more, I ſhall, *firſt*, Conſider it negatively, and ſhew what it is not; and, *ſecondly*, poſitively, wherein it doth really conſiſt.

I. Negatively, To ſtand in a covenant-relation to God, is not to be underſtood here,

1. Of our being under the bond and engagement of the covenant of works. Though it is moſt certain, that all Adam's poſterity, by virtue hereof, are engaged to God, to perform perfect obedience, and fulfil the whole law; yea, and by breaking it, are obliged to pay the penalty thereof, bear God's curſe, underly death, and ſatisfy God's infinite juſtice; and ſo all of us are naturally in covenant with God in this reſpect. But oh! we have no happineſs, no comfort, by being ſo; ſeeing we have broke the covenant of works, and incurred

incurred the penalty thereof; for though we ſtill ſtand under engagements to God by it; yet he is looſed from all obligations to us, to make us happy: yea, by our breaking it, he is under engagement to deſtroy us. Oh! we cannot, by this covenant, plead any intereſt in God as our God, or Father: no, we can only look on him as our Law-giver, our Judge, our Puniſher and Enemy. That is all the relation that God ſtands in now to us, by virtue of the covenant of works.

2. There is more requiſite to make up this covenant-relation to God, than that bleſſed covenant of redemption, which God entered into from eternity with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, as our head and repreſentative, for ſaving the elect. That glorious tranſaction is indeed the foundation and riſe of our covenant-relation to God; but doth not formally conſtitute and make it up. For an elect perſon cannot be ſaid to be in covenant with God from eternity, unleſs by God's appointment and deſignation: he is never formally in it, till he believe, and thereby ratify and approve what Chriſt did from eternity, engage for him, and perſonally conſent to take God for his God, in and through Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator. So that you ſee, the covenant of redemption will not ſave you, nor inſtate you in covenant with God, if ye can ſay no more; there muſt be ſomething done in and by you, to intitle you to that covenant of redemption, and to infeft and poſſeſs you of the privileges and bleſſings therein promiſed to Chriſt our Head; and this is only done by the ſubſequent ratification of that covenant and treaty, made with the elect in time, by the preaching of the goſpel, which is called the covenant of grace.

3. There is more in this covenant-relation to God, which makes us happy; than our being viſibly and externally in covenant with God by an outward profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and ſubjection to goſpel-ordinances: for thus, every church that hath the word and ſacraments, is in covenant with God. Hence the Lord ſays to the church of the Jews, Ezek. xvi. 8. "I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine." They were viſibly and externally in covenent with God,

by

by their ſubjection to his ordinances and inſtitutions. They all did partake of the ſeal of his covenant; viz. circumciſion: and hence, when a viſible church makes defection from God, he threatens to come and "avenge the quarrel of his covenant," Lev. xxvi. 15. All the members of a viſible church are federally in covenant with God by their profeſſion of Chriſt, and being baptized in his name; but ſuch an external covenant-relation to God, will not make us happy: therefore, let us beware of reſting on it; and let us ſeek earneſtly to be really and internally in covenant with God.

4. There is more in it than being nationally in covenant with God, by virtue of a ſolemn tranſaction entered into, and ſubſcribed by the rulers, nobles, miniſters, and repreſentatives of a land; whereby they, with conſent of the whole nation, bind and engage themſelves and their poſterity to the Lord. This did the nation of the Jews, and ſo they were God's covenanted people, above all other nations of the world; but yet this national covenant did not entitle them to ſaving bleſſings, or give them an intereſt in God, as their God, in a ſaving way: for many were in that national covenant that never came to be in a gracious ſtate, tho' yet they received many ſpecial favours and deliverances upon the account of it. Some in this land have the honour of being nationally in covenant with God, which indeed is our glory, and perhaps the ground of many national mercies and deliverances; though it is not the ſpring of ſaving mercies, nor that which entitles us to God as our God, in a ſaving way. Many may profeſs to own this national-covenant, that never took hold of the covenant of grace, and gave themſelves to God according the tenor thereof.

5. There is more in this, than the drawing up the form of a perſonal covenant with God, profeſſing to conſent thereto, and ſubſcribing it with the hand. For all this may be done in ſuch a manner, as will not entitle us to God as our God in a ſaving way. This work, though good in itſelf, and profitable to many; yet it may be performed by ſome in ſuch an hypocritical, formal, or legal manner, as doth make it an abomination

mination to an holy God, that looks for truth in the inward parts.

But II. Positively, we come to be in covenant with God in a saving way, when we are taken within the bond of the covenant of grace, and do consent sincerely to the gracious terms of it; for it is only by virtue of our coming into this covenant, that we have ground to claim this happiness of *having God for our God.* Now, for us to come into the bond of this covenant of grace, is by faith to "take hold of God's covenant," as it is called, Isa. lvi. 4. And this we do, when we are thoroughly convinced of our sin, misery, and undone state under a covenant of works, and do hence betake ourselves to the new-covenant, or gracious method of salvation proposed to us in the gospel, through Jesus Christ and his righteousness; and do cordially acquiesce in, and approve of this noble contrivance, and accept of Jesus Christ as our only Mediator, Surety and Peace-maker with God: and in him do sincerely make choice of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be our God and portion; and also give ourselves, soul and body, to be the Lord's, engaging, in the strength of our great Surety, to abandon sin, live for God, and walk with him in newness of life, as becomes his covenanted people. Now, when our souls are helped and determined by the Spirit of grace, to do all this heartily and sincerely, then do we enter among that "happy people, whose God is the Lord."

II. The *second* thing in the method, is to enquire into the import of this great privilege, to have God for our God. *I will be your God*, is the greatest promise and substance of the covenant of grace, being the great thing stipulated on God's part therein, Jer. xxxi. 33. and indeed it is the sum and compend of all his other promises. And imports these things:

1. Reconciliation and friendship with God, *I will be your God*, i. e. I will be no longer an angry judge, but a gracious reconciled God to you; my justice is appeased, wrath pacified, fury is not in me, I have found a ransom in Christ; he is the propitiation for your sins.

2. A near relation betwixt God and, yea, nearer than any relation among creatures "I will be your God," implies, I will ſtand you inſtead of all relations. 1. I will be a Father in Chriſt to you, adopt you for my children, take you into my family, I will pity and provide for you, I will bequeath to you a rich inheritance, you are heirs of God, and coheirs with my eternal Son. 2. I will be a huſband to you, "your Maker is your huſband," Iſa. liv. 5. I will marry you to myſelf, I will love you, cloath you, enrich you, and provide a noble dowry for you. 3. I will be your king. I will take you for my ſubjects, I will govern you, protect and defend you from all your enemies. Yea, I will be your phyſician, your ſhepherd, your guide, and inſtead of all relations to you.

3. *I will be your God*, imports a right and title to God, and all that is in him; intimate communion with him, and a communication of all good things from him. Nay, there is ſtill more in this expreſſion than can be unfolded by words; there is more in it, than, I will be father, friend, huſband, benefactor, &c. to you: More in it, than I will give you heaven and everlaſting life, or all the bleſſings of heaven and earth, time and eternity: no, I will give you more, I will give you myſelf, a JEHOVAH, a whole Deity, i. e. all that is in me, all I am, all I have, all I can do, is thine. O the magnificent bounty of God! for when he had no greater, no better thing to beſtow on his people, he beſtows himſelf on them.

You may ſay, how can this be? An infinite God, ſo great, ſo glorious, we are not capable of receiving, comprehending, or enjoying him. *Anſ.* So far as you are capable to receive and enjoy him, he is yours; all that is in him, is given to you for your benefit.

1. All he is perſonally, i. e. the three Perſons of the glorious Trinity are yours, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. 1. God the Father is yours to love you, to elect you, and contrive redemption for you, John xvi. 27. "The Father himſelf loveth you" 2. God the Son is yours, to be a ranſom for you, to ſatisfy juſtice for you; yours to be born for you, to live, to die

die for you, to rise again for you, to ascend into heaven for you, to sit at God's right hand for you, &c. All this is plain from Isa. ix. 6. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." And Cant. ii. 16. "My beloved is mine." 3. The Holy Ghost is yours, to apply this redemption to you, to change your hearts, to teach you, sanctify you, work in you, dwell in you, to conduct and guide you to glory, 1 Cor. iii. 16. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." So you see, O believer, whatever God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is, and can do for your salvation and happiness, they are yours, and made over to you in the covenant of grace.

2. All he is essentially, his infinite essence is yours, i. e. all his glorious attributes and perfections. 1. My mercy is yours, O believer, to pardon your sins and deliver you from guilt, to sympathize with, and comfort you in all your trials and afflictions. 2. My wisdom is yours to provide for you, to counsel and direct you, and to turn all things about for your good. 3. My omnipotence is yours, to guard and protect you from all your enemies, to support and preserve you to salvation. 4. My goodness is yours, to enrich you, bestow grace and glory, and all good things on you. 5. My omniscience is your overseer, to watch over and warn you against approaching dangers. 6. My holiness is your fountain of grace, to sanctify and make you holy. 7. My omnipresence is your companion, to attend and solace you in all places and conditions. 8. My justice is your rewarder, to bestow heaven on you; and also your avenger to punish those that wrong you. 9. My all-sufficiency is your inheritance, for giving you complete and perfect happiness. My unchangeableness is the rock of your security. My faithfulness, your pledge and surety, for the accomplishment of all my promises to you: and my eternity is the date of your happiness. So that, O believer, you see, all God's essential perfections are made over to thee in the covenant of grace, and therein thou hast an unsearchable treasure. In God's attributes there is a suitable remedy for all these maladies and miseries

which ſin has brought on you: his wiſdom cures your ignorance, his grace, your guilt, his power your weakneſs, his mercy your miſery, his goodneſs your evil, his faithfulneſs your inconſtancy, his holineſs your impurity, his riches your poverty, and his fulneſs your wants.

Laſtly, I will be your God, imports, that all that God hath ſhall be made over to you, 1 Cor. iii. 21. "All things are yours." All mine are thine. As for inſtance, 1. All my promiſes are yours; the promiſes both of this life, and that which is to come; my promiſes of pardon, my promiſes of healing, my promiſes of ſanctification, my promiſes of quickening and ſtrength, my promiſes of through-bearing and comfort in trouble, my promiſes of grace and glory; they are your inheritance.

2. My *gifts* and *graces* are yours, faith, love, hope, fear, humility, patience, and all the fulneſs that is in Chriſt, is yours; all theſe graces are yours, as armour to defend you, jewels to enrich you, and cordials to refreſh you, while you ſojourn in the wilderneſs.

3. My *creatures* are yours. My creatures on earth are yours, to ſerve and ſuſtain you, my angels in heaven are yours, to guard and encamp about you. The earth is your walking and ſojourning place, the heavens your country and inheritance. In a word, O believer! my ordinances and ſacraments are yours, to ſtrengthen and feed you; my providence is yours, to make all things work for your good; my rod is yours; my people is yours; my kingdom is yours; nay, my eternal Son Chriſt is yours; all he has done and ſuffered, even his whole purchaſe is yours: both things preſent and to come, life and death, this world and heaven, "all are yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. Behold, when there was a covenant made between Jehoſhaphat and the king of Iſrael, Jehoſhaphat promiſed Ahab whatever he had or could do, 1 Kings xxii. 4. "I am, (ſays he,) as thou art, my people as thy people, my horſes as thy horſes;" ſo in the covenant of grace, whatever God hath or can do, is made over to you. But what do I ſpeak? For no created mind can conceive, nor the tongues of men and angels,

angels, ſhew forth the full import of this word, "I will be your God."

III. The *third* thing propoſed was, to ſhew how this privilege of having God for our God, in covenant, appears to be the top of our happineſs. And this doth evidently appear from theſe things.

I. From the vaſtneſs of the portion, which believers have in a covenanted God, as above deſcribed. There is more comprehended here, "than eye hath ſeen, ear hath heard, or the heart of man can conceive." In this covenant of grace you have all that is good, all that is great, and all that can make you happy. You have covenant preſence, covenant proviſion, covenant conduct, covenant protection, covenant ſupport, and covenant ſtrength for all duties, trials, and performances in this world: And you have eternal glory covenanted to you for the world to come. Now, can any thing be ſo ſatisfying to the renewed mind, as, to review this vaſt portion! It is pleaſant for a man to view his temporal intereſts, to walk about his buildings, plantings, gardens, flocks, fields, &c. But what are theſe to this portion of the believer? It was a raviſhing proſpect that Moſes got of Canaan from mount Nebo: How pleaſant was it to view the lovely hills, the fruitful vallies, the winding rivers, the beautiful gardens, and flouriſhing trees, in that incomparable land! But all that was nothing to the believer's covenanted inheritance. View the covenant, and ſee who can number the promiſes and bleſſings contained in it; time would fail to mention them: Read the ſcriptures from the beginning to the end, and behold a dazzling and glorious ſight! As the heavens are beſpangled with ſtars in a winter night, ſo is God's word and covenant with ſhining promiſes. We may allude to that paſſage in God's covenanting with Abraham, Gen. xv. 5. God brought him forth abroad, and ſaid, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the ſtars, if thou be able to number them: ſo ſhall thy ſeed be." Look, O believer, to the firmament of the covenant, and tell the ſtars of the promiſes, if thou be able to number or weigh them; ſo ſhall alſo the bleſſings and benefits be, which thou haſt to inherit.

II. To

II. To be in covenant with God, muſt be the top of our happineſs, if we conſider the ſuitableneſs of the promiſes, and bleſſings of his covenant to all our wants and exigencies. All that we ſtand in need of, and all we can deſire, is fully provided for here. O believers, want want ye? What fear ye? What are ye troubled with? Here it may be ſuitably anſwered and remedied. Is ſin and guilt your trouble? In this covenant there is pardon and redemption. Are your ſins great? Here's the Redeemer's "blood that cleanſeth from all ſin." Are ye condemned by the law's ſentence? Here's a ſufficient righteouſneſs for your juſtification and acquittance. Are you poor? Here's fine gold. Are you blind? Here's eye ſalve. Are you naked? Here's white raiment. Are you ſtarving? Here's the manna and the fatted calf. Are you diſeaſed? Here's the balm of Gilead. Are you chained priſoners? Here's deliverance for the captives. Are you drowned in debt? Here's an all-ſufficient Surety. Are you dead? Here's the reſurrection and the life. Is pollution and filtineſs your trouble? Here's a deep and open fountain that runs continually. Art thou weak and unable for duty? Here is covenanted grace and ſtrength, which ſhall be ſufficient for thee. This covenant contains all neceſſary and ſuitable ſupplies for thy wants; ſo that if God be your God, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, your needs ſhall be richly ſupplied, according to that promiſe, Phil. iv. 19. "My God ſhall ſupply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Chriſt Jeſus."

III. This covenant-relation to God is our greateſt happineſs, in regard it doth take the terror out of every thing that is terrible to the believer.

1. This covenant-relation removes all terror from our thoughts of God's holineſs and juſtice. The wicked cannot think of a juſt and holy God without horror, and therefore, they baniſh the thoughts of God out of their minds; hence it is ſaid, Pſal. x. 4. "God is not in all their thoughts:" For as many thoughts as are in their hearts, God is in none of them. But believers may have pleaſant and delightful thoughts of God

God as their reconciled Father in Chriſt: his holineſs is a fountain of grace to them, and his juſtice the ſecurity of their happineſs. The covenant-relation takes all terror out of juſtice, though the moſt terrible attribute of God unto a ſinner, and makes it, that before was an enemy, become a friend, and enter into a ſtrict alliance with the believer. Before it ſtood as a flaming ſword at the door of paradiſe to keep them out: But now it ſtands as an advocate pleading for their entrance, 1 John i. 9. "He is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins." O believer, thy happineſs is certain; for juſtice is come over to thy ſide, and pleads for thy pardon, becauſe the debt is paid, and for the crown of glory, ſeeing the price is laid down.

2. This covenant-relation takes all terror out of afflictions: Why? It alters the very nature of them to believers, and makes them become good and medicinal to them, Pſal. cxix. 71. Iſa. xxvii. 9. Yea, they are changed into covenanted mercies, Pſal. lxxxix. 32. Pſ. cxix. 75. Chriſt hath ſhed his blood to purchaſe ſanctified croſſes to his people. So believers, whatever trials you meet with, though they be ſharp and ſmartings, you may make ſuch a reflection as this, The Lord ſees I want this, otherwiſe I ſhould not be exerciſed with it: My covenanted God knows that this, and no leſs than this, is needful for me.

3. It takes the terror out of the alarming judgments of God, that come on the wicked and ungodly. When God riſes to take vengeance on his enemies, and puniſh ſinful nations with his deſolating plagues, you may ſay, Theſe are the mighty acts of my God and king: Theſe things diſplay my Father's power and glory: but, in midſt of all, his children are ſafe.

4. It will take the terror out of death: for though death ſtrip you of other comforts, it cannot diſſolve your covenant-relation to God. You may ſing that ſwan-ſong, Pſal. xlviii. 14. "For this God is our God for ever and ever, and he will be our guide even unto death." It is this that gives a believer peace in his latter end: it made David to triumph in the view of approaching death, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Death muſt ſurely be

be the king of terrors to an unbeliever; why? It is terrible to think, "I am going to appear before that God I do not know, I have no intereſt in, nor acquaintance with: How can I expect help from him now, whom I never loved, nor ſought unto before?" But a covenanted ſoul may ſay, "I will not fear, for I know whither I am going, the place I know, and the way I know, and the God of that land I know. Why ſhould I be unwilling to go to my covenanted God and friend, with whom I have had ſweet converſe, whoſe preſence I earneſtly have longed for? Is not death my Father's ſervant, ſent to bring me home to my Father's houſe, where I will be put in full poſſeſſion of all the bleſſings of the covenant? Surely then the day of my death will be better to me than the day of my birth."

5. This covenant-relation takes the terror out of the great judgment day. Why? O believer, it is the day of your covenanted Redeemer's coming to take you home to dwell eternally with him. Doth not a chaſte wife long for the return of her huſband? And will not a believing ſoul, betrothed to Chriſt, long for the glorious bridegroom's return to conſummate the happy marriage? Let others tremble at his coming, and cry to the "rocks to hide them from the face of the Lamb;" but ſurely you have cauſe to "lift up your head with joy, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh."

IV. This covenant relation to God is our greateſt happineſs; for it doth exceedingly ſweeten every thing that is comfortable.

1. It ſweetens the thoughts of Chriſt to a believer. When the word brings the news of his glory to your ears, or the ſacrament ſets him forth as crucified before your eyes, your hearts may preſently warm to him, and cry with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" and with Paul, "It is the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me;" and with the ſpouſe, "My beloved is mine, and I am his:" "All he did and ſuffered was for me; his bloody ſweat, his painful wounds, his dying groans, were for me. He thought on me when he was on the croſs: my name is this day on his

his breaſt-plate: he ſtill thinks on me, and pleads for me, as his covenanted ſpouſe. "I know my Redeemer liveth; and becauſe he lives, I ſhall live alſo." Good ground have ye to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. civ. 34. "My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet; I will be glad in the Lord."

2. It will make goſpel-ordinances very ſweet: As, for inſtance, (1.) Prayer may be ſweet to a covenanted ſoul: Is it not ſweet to come into God's preſence, and call him our Father, and ſpeak to him as ſuch? "Father, grant me this, and the other good thing which I want." An uncovenanted ſoul comes before God as his judge; But O! it is comfortable to draw nigh to him as our reconciled God and Father in Chriſt, and with a holy confidence ſpread our wants before him. (2.) It will make the word ſweet; a covenanted ſoul may read, and hear it as a love-letter come from his friend and huſband, and may ſweetly apply the promiſe of it to himſelf, and ſay, This is mine; this was God's gracious unchangeable purpoſe to me in Chriſt: And O but that would make the word as a lovely ſong in our ears! (3.) It will make the Lord's ſupper ſweet. O covenanted ſouls, you can come to this holy table, as to a precious feaſt provided for you; you can come as God's friends and invited gueſts, and expect a kindly welcome from him: It is to you he ſaith, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," Cant. v. 1. This is your Father's table covered for you; many preſume thither who have no right; but you have no ground to queſtion your right, nor doubt your welcome: A communion day may be a pleaſant day to you, and you may rejoice at the intimation and approach of it, and look on it as a foretaſte of heaven, and a pledge of your eternal communion with God.

3. This covenant relation will ſweeten your thoughts of God's works, both of creation and providence. When you walk through the fields, you may ſay, I walk on my father's footſtool, which he hath given me to ſojourn upon while I am here below. When you view the ſtructure of the heavens, you may ſay, Behold my Father's palace, where he dwells, and where I will

dwell with him ere long: If the floor and pavement of it be ſo glorious, what muſt its roof, walls, gates, and furniture be? Yet it is my home and dwelling place, prepared by Chriſt my forerunner. When you conſider the diſpenſations of providence, and God's various dealings towards you, you may ſay, How great pains is he at with me to promote my welfare, and prepare me for heaven? Though diſpenſations be ſometimes myſterious now, yet how wiſe and beautiful will the whole ſcheme of providence concerning me appear in the iſſue?

4. It will ſweeten all your outward mercies: Why? you may receive them as love-tokens from heaven, and pledges of God's fatherly good will to you in Chriſt. Art thou raiſed from a ſick-bed, or delivered from any trouble? you may ſay of it as Hezekiah did, Iſ. xxxviii. 17. "Thou haſt, in love to my ſoul, delivered it from the pit of corruption." Again, every meal of meat, or morſel of bread thou eateſt, may be doubly ſweet to you; for it is the fruit of Chriſt's purchaſe; it is dipt in his blood, and comes through the covenant-channel to thy hand: Thou mayſt ſpy covenant-love in every common mercy; thou enjoyeſt it not as a creature, but as an heir: Thy Father ſends it from his own table to thee, as an earneſt of greater and better things laid up for thee hereafter. That word belongs to thee, which we have in Eccl. ix. 7. "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works."

Laſtly, This covenant relation to God is our greateſt happineſs in regard of the ſure and indiſſoluble nature of it, Iſa. liv. 10. Mutable creatures alter their purpoſes, and break their leagues and covenants which they made; but God will never break his covenant of grace with his people. A covenant with a nation may be diſſolved, as with the people of the Jews, becauſe it is not built on the eternal purpoſe of God, to put his fear in their hearts; but it hath a reſpect to their obedience. But his covenant with the elect is indiſſoluble, ſeeing it depends on God's eternal purpoſe, to make them perſevere in his ways. The covenant of grace doth

doth not run thus, "I will be their God, if they will be my people;" but "I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people." He puts a condition indeed in his covenant of grace; but he has reſolved and decreed from eternity, to work that condition in their hearts, Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me." There we ſee, that God is on both ſides in this covenant, he engages not only for his own part, but for ours, that we ſhall fear him, and ſhall not depart from him. How happy then are believers who are in covenant with God! They are a happy people; and nothing can deprive them of their happineſs. Adultery may diſſolve the marriage-covenant among men, but not ſo here; for God ſaith to his covenanted people, "Thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me: Turn, ye backſliding children, ſaith the Lord; for I am married unto you," Jer. iii. 1, 14. Again, death cannot diſſolve this covenant-relation, as it doth among men; but brings us the nearer to our covenanted God; ſo that a covenanted ſoul, when he finds death begin to aſſault his clay-tabernacle, he may even rejoice, and ſing with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 26. "My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever." What though my eye and heart-ſtrings be ready to break, and the lamp of my life be like a candle burnt to the ſocket, and near the going out; yet ſtill God is my God, and portion for ever. Thus Olevian, a dying ſaint, comforted himſelf, "My hearing is gone, my ſmelling is gone, and my ſight is going: my ſpeech and feeling are almoſt gone; but the loving kindneſs of God is ſtill the ſame, and will never depart from me."

APPLICATION.

Uſe I. Of *Information*. We may hence ſee, 1. How far miſtaken the world is about a believer's lot; they many times reckon them poor and deſpicable, and the

off-ſcouring of all things; but certainly they are, of all perſons in the world, the wiſeſt; for they make the wiſeſt choice, and the beſt bargain: Nay, they are the richeſt too, for all things are theirs; though they oft ſeem to the world to have nothing, 2 Cor. vi. 10.

2. We may hence infer, that believers have no ground to envy the worldling of his portion, but rather to pity him; for he hath no more than what is ſeen by all, and that but for a ſhort time, Pſal. xvii. 14. Luke vi. 24. A carnal man may ſay, This houſe, this eſtate, this money is mine; but a Chriſtian can ſay, *This God is mine.* And a covenanted God is more than ten thouſand kingdoms.

Uſe II. Of *Terror*, to thoſe that are out of the bond of this covenant: For if the people be ſo happy, *whoſe God is the Lord*, how unhappy and miſerable muſt they be, whoſe God is not the Lord: Nay, your caſe is unſpeakably ſad and diſmal; and O! that God would ſend a wakening word to all ſuch, and ſound an alarm in your ears this day.

1. You have neither art nor part in the God of Iſrael, Eph. ii 12. He ſtands in no relation to you, but that of Creator, and ſo ſtands he to the devils: But what comfort can they draw from that? for "he that made them, will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will ſhew them no favour."

2. You are under a covenant of works, and under its fearful curſe and ſentence for the breach thereof. It is terrible to be under ſentence of death by an earthly judge, and to be looking every hour to be taken forth to the ſcaffold; But your caſe is far worſe; you are doomed to eternal death, and you may be looking every moment to be led forth to execution. When you awake in the morning, you may ſay, Shall this be the day of my execution? Shall I be taken to the ſcaffold of divine vengeance before night? Every head-ach or ſick heart, every pain or ſtitch in back or breaſt, may put you to ſay, Is this the meſſenger that the Judge is to ſend to bring me forth? Sad is your caſe, O uncovenanted ſoul, you may ſleep and wake in continual fear: for you are ſtill tottering on the brink of hell, and ridge of

of deſtruction. O! tremble then to lie down another night in this condition. *In the name of God,* I obteſt you to awake from ſleep, and find no reſt for *the ſole of your foot,* till, like Noah's dove, ye come into the ark of the covenant.

Uſe III. Of *Examination.* O communicants, try if ye be within this covenant; remember, if you be not, you have no right to the ſeals of it; no right to ſit down at the Lord's table. "Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat:" And examine yourſelves by theſe marks.

1. Know you any thing of a change of your ſtate? Can you ſay? "Once I was a bond-ſlave to ſatan, and an enemy of God: once I loved ſin, and hated holineſs: but now God hath opened my eyes, and humbled my heart for ſin, and made me caſt down the weapons of my rebellion at his feet: once I was at peace without Chriſt the Mediator; but now I ſee nothing but fire and wrath out of him: once I thought little of ſin; but now I ſee it to be the moſt black and bloody thing in the world." Then this is a good ſign.

2. If you be in covenant with God, you will certainly love God with your hearts, and love the Mediator, who brought you into the covenant. Can you ſay then with Peter, "Lord, thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee?" Lord, though I cannot hear, pray, praiſe, or communicate as I ought, yet thou knoweſt I love thee; yea, I love thee above all things. And tho' all the riches, honours, and pleaſures of the world were in my offer or poſſeſſion, and Chriſt would ſay, You muſt either part with theſe, or part with me; my heart would anſwer, Lord abide thou with me, and let them all be gone.

3. Thoſe that are in covenant with God, have certainly made choice of God, as their God and portion. Can you ſay you have done this, O doubting communicant? Though you cannot ſay, that God hath choſen you, yet doth your heart truly chuſe him? And are you reſolved never to be ſatisfied without him? And whatever offers be made to you, yet you will be put

off

off with nothing beſides God. Then this may give you comfort.

4. Can you ſay you have made a reſignation of yourſelves, and of all you have to God, and you reſolve to renew it again this night in ſecret, and to-morrow before men and angels? Then it is a token for good. It may be, doubting ſoul, thou art afraid to ſay, Lord thou art my God; but canſt thou venture to ſay, "Lord, I am thine, I reſolve to be thine, and thine only; I will not be mine own, I will not be the devil's, I will not be the world's, I will not be my luſt's; Lord, I am reſolved to be none's but thine." Well, let this comfort you when other marks cannot. For if once you come the length to ſay, "Lord, I am thine," you may ſay in the next place, "Lord, thou art mine;" for the relation is always reciprocal: And this is the reaſoning of the ſpouſe, Cant. vi. 3. "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine."

5. Are you mightily pleaſed with the contrivement and deſign of this covenant, which is to debaſe ſelf, and exalt free grace? And would you deſire heaven, though it were for no more, but to ſtand eternal monuments of free grace, and join your note with the redeemed, eternally to cry, "Not unto us, not unto us, but to thee be the glory?"

And, *Laſtly*, Are you inclined to perform covenant-duties conſcientiouſly, and that in a covenant way, relying on covenant ſtrength, and from a principle of love and gratitude to your covenanted God, and with an eye to glorify his name: Then fear not to come forward to take the ſeal of the covenant, for you belong to it.

Uſe IV. Of *Exhortation.* And this I ſhall direct to all that hear the goſpel, eſpecially communicants. O come take hold of God's covenant, and enter yourſelves within the bond of it; and then come and take God's ſeal to the bargain. I here, in my great Lord and Maſter's name, make offer of God's covenant to all of you, be what you will, goſpel-ſlighters, rebels againſt God, graceleſs and profane ſinners, carnal and earthly-minded ſouls, hypocrites, formaliſts, backſliders,

ers, weary and heavy laden ſinners, doubting and diſcouraged ſouls; I exhort and beſeech you all to come and take hold of God's covenant, make choice of God for your God and portion, and Jeſus Chriſt for your Mediator and Peace-maker with God, and reſign yourſelves freely to God in Chriſt. O ſinners, the covenant is free, the call is preſſing, the offer is great, the bargain excellent.

This is the moſt honourable and advantageous bargain that ever you made; the deſign of my whole ſermon has been to recommend it, and perſuade you to cloſe with it: God knows how your hearts ſtand inclined. But I would have you all to remember, that our time is ſhort, and the hour is coming, when we that are miniſters muſt leave this work of beſeeching, preſſing, and arguing with you, and go to him that ſent us, with a faithful account of the iſſue of our meſſage. And O how ſad and unpleaſant will the account be that we muſt give of thoſe of you whom we leave unperſuaded to take hold of God's covenant. It will be a melancholy thing, and matter of grief, to accuſe any of you to the Father; but we muſt do it, if you will not prevent it by your hearkening and obeying. If you do it not in time, as God is in heaven, you will eternally repent it: I do here warn you of your danger, and call heaven and earth to record againſt you that I am free of your blood. O young people! what ſay ye to it? Will ye take hold of the covenant? Your baptiſm will not profit you, unleſs now, when ye are of age, ye ratify your parents deed, renew your baptiſmal engagements, and perſonally join yourſelves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant. If ye approach to the Lord's table without doing it, you will be unworthy communicants, you will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, you will but mock God and deceive your own ſouls. I have not time to anſwer objections againſt covenanting with God; I ſhall only ſpeak to one queſtion, and then conclude.

Queſt. But you may ſay, what would you have us doing, in order to our being brought into God's covenant? We would gladly be among the number of that happy

happy people, whoſe God is the Lord, and who are in covenant with him; but we know not how to get into it.

Anſ. Surely the ſoul is not wholly paſſive in this tranſaction, but muſt be active in it. Something is to be done on our part, when we enter into covenant with God; and therefore we are called to "join ourſelves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant," Jer. l. 5. I do not mean, that we can do any thing to enter ourſelves into covenant with God in our own ſtrength; no, it is God by his Spirit "that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure." The duty is ours, but the work is the Spirit's. It is the Spirit that courts the heart, and prevails with the ſoul to give its conſent to this bleſſed bargain. But, in the mean time, let us be minting at our duty as we can, looking for the Spirit's concurrence. And there are four things to be done by us, in order to our being in covenant with God, and God help every communicant to aim ſincerely at them this night. 1. Renunciation. 2. Acceptation. 3. Dedication. 4. Solemn engagement.

1. You muſt heartily renounce and break league with all the Lord's enemies and rivals, Hoſ xiv. 8. and particularly renounce, (1.) Satan's government; though formerly you was led captive by him at his will, yet now ſolemnly renounce all ſubjection to him, and hearken no more to his ſuggeſtions and temptations, let God alone have the throne. (2.) Renounce the world, be no more a ſlave to it as you have been; ſet your heart no longer on its profits and pleaſures, as your portion and inheritance; but make God your treaſure. (3.) Renounce the fleſh; however its luſts have been beloved by you, let them reign no more in you; but condemn them to be crucified as the murderers of Chriſt. (4) Renounce your own righteouſneſs in point of juſtification and acceptance with God, and ſolemnly diſclaim all truſt and confidence in your own duties and performances.

2. *Acceptation.* Heartily aim to make choice, and accept of God in Chriſt, as your ſoul's portion and inheritance, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. But obſerve, how God is to

to be chosen, only in and through Christ the Mediator; for "out of Christ he is a consuming fire;" therefore accept of precious Christ as your guide and way to the Father, and of his satisfaction and merits, as the ransom for delivering you from wrath. Accept of the Holy Ghost as your sanctifier, quickener, and comforter; and heartily acquiesce in the covenant of grace, and gospel-method of salvation through Christ, as "well-ordered in all things.

3. *Dedication.* As God gives himself wholly to you, so do you dedicate and give up yourselves, and all that you have, wholly and unreservedly to God, a Chron. xxx. 8. Give up your souls, with all their powers and faculties; your bodies, with all their senses and members; and all your enjoyments, temporal and spiritual, to be employed for God and his honour, and to be entirely disposed of for his service and glory.

4. *Solemn engagement.* You must resolve and engage, in the "strength of Christ our Surety," to live wholly to your covenanted God, and walk with him in newness of life, perform every duty he commands, suffer patiently what he inflicts, watch against every sin he forbids, and manfully fight against his enemies. Thus be aiming at your duty, and lay yourselves in the Spirit's way, and who knows but God will pity and help you, honestly to take hold of his covenant, and also himself say *Amen* to the bargain. The Lord bless his word. Amen.

SERMON XV.

A Preparation Sermon before the Communion.

The right Improvement of the day of Grace.

Heb. iii. 7. 8. *Wherefore, as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation,* &c.

IN this chapter, the apoſtle doth diſplay ſomething of the Mediator's glory and excellency; he ſhews, that he is far preferable to Moſes, as much as the builder of the houſe is greater than the houſe; and that he alone is the eternal Son of God, the great prophet and teacher of his church. And having laid down ſeveral propoſitions to this purpoſe, he comes to draw an inference from them in the words of my text, *Wherefore,* &c. As if he had ſaid, ſeeing Chriſt is the chief apoſtle and prophet of his church, a teacher ſent from God to inſtruct the world; it is therefore our indiſpenſible duty to hear his voice, comply with his counſels, and that without delay; and this exhortation the apoſtle ſtrengthens with that of David, Pſal. xcv. 7.

In the words we have, 1. The illative particle *Wherefore,* which denotes the deduction of the enſuing exhortation from the preceding diſcourſe. 2. We have the authority which the apoſtle cites for his exhortation, even that of the Holy Ghoſt, who of old ſpake by David, Pſal. xcv. and now ſpeaketh by him in the text. 3. In the exhortation, we have a duty required of us, viz. hearing of Chriſt's voice, *Hear his voice*; not the voice of a mere man, not the voice of an apoſtle or angel, but of the eternal Son of God, that glorious ambaſſador of heaven, who was ſent to the world for advancing a treaty of peace; his voice we are to hear, his

his inſtructions and calls we are to comply with. 4. We have the circumſtance of time, and ſpecial ſeaſon when this duty is to be done, and that is preſently, *to-day*, or in this ſolemn day of grace. 5. We have, in the following verſe, a cautionary direction to all that ſit under the goſpel, to beware of hardening their hearts, or ſtopping their ears againſt Chriſt's calls, as the obſtinate and hard-hearted Jews did in the wilderneſs.

Doct. I. "That the conſideration of the authority of the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaking in the ſcripture, ſhould mightily enforce upon us the duties there exhorted." We ſhould conſider whoſe authority we deſpiſe, when we ſlight the offers, calls, and duties preſſed in the goſpel, even that of the Holy Ghoſt; and it is a fearful thing to ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

Doct. II. "That the voice which we are called to hear in and by the goſpel, is Chriſt's voice; it is not the voice of a man like ourſelves, but the voice of the Son of God, and therefore ſhould be awfully regarded." But the doctrine which I intend to handle at this time, ſhall be drawn chiefly from the ſeaſon of preſſing this duty.

Doct. III. "That all who ſit under the goſpel, ſhould be careful to improve the ſeaſons of grace, and opportunities of hearing Chriſt's voice, which God allows them."

In handling this doctrine, I ſhall ſhew,

I. What is implied in hearing of Chriſt's voice in the goſpel.

II. That there are ſome ſpecial ſeaſons for hearing of Chriſt's voice, and what theſe are.

III. How we ought to improve theſe ſeaſons.

IV. Reaſons why we ſhould carefully improve them.

V. I ſhall apply the whole.

I. As to the *Firſt*, What is imported in hearing of Chriſt's voice in the goſpel. I ſhall not inſiſt on what is preſuppoſed in it, viz. That our ears are naturally ſtopped againſt Chriſt; and it is only a work of his power on the ſoul that can open them; but ſhew what it directly implies.

1. This

1. This *hearing* doth import, our believing the word to be Chriſt's voice, and not the voice of man. As long as we regard what we hear, only as the voice of a miniſter, or man like ourſelves, it will never humble us, nor prevail with our ſtubborn hearts; but when we begin to take it up as the voice of God, or Chriſt ſpeaking to us from heaven, then the ſoul doth hearken, conſider, and obey. Till Samuel knew that it was the Lord's voice ſpeaking to him, 1 Sam. i. he ſtill took the wrong courſe: he went to Eli, when he ſhould have hearkened to God.

2. A cloſe and ſerious attention of the mind to what we hear. The ſoul that hears Chriſt's voice ſtops his career in purſuing ſin and the world, which always makes a buzzing noiſe about his ears; and applies his ear to hear what Chriſt ſaith; turns attentive to, and ſerious about the things of eternity.

3. The application of what Chriſt ſaith unto us in particular: As if Chriſt ſpoke to us by name and ſirname, and ſaid to us, as Nathan did to David, "Thou art the man." We commonly neglect what Chriſt ſaith by his word, by putting it by ourſelves to others; but we hear him aright when we bring what he ſaith cloſe home to our own hearts and conſciences, and ſay, "It is to me this word is directed; it is me that Chriſt intends, it is I that the law condemns, and that juſtice threatens. I am the guilty ſinner that have ſhut out Chriſt, and preferred my luſts to him, and yet he now pities me, and calls me to open to him."

4. A thorough conviction of the neceſſity and advantage of yielding to Chriſt's calls; O ſaith the ſoul, long hath my Saviour knocked, ſaying, "Open to me, ariſe and come away," and yet I have ſit ſtill, and given him a deaf ear; and now I am loſt, undone, and condemned in my preſent caſe; if death knock before I open to Chriſt, I can look for nothing but the bottomleſs pit to open and ſwallow me up for ever. But if I open to Chriſt, I am happy, and out of the reach of death for ever.

5. It imports the ſoul's cordial complying with Chriſt's calls, and conſenting to receive and embrace him

him as he is offered in the goſpel; that is to ſay, as a prophet to teach us, a prieſt to atone for us, and a king to rule us. The man that hears Chriſt's voice, goes in heartily with the goſpel method of ſalvation, acquieſces in that noble contrivance of grace, is well content to be juſtified by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, to be taught at Chriſt's ſchool, and governed by his laws.

II. The *ſecond* thing to be diſcourſed is, That there are ſome ſpecial ſeaſons for hearing Chriſt's voice, that ſhould be carefully improven; and what theſe are, There are ſome advantageous opportune ſeaſons of grace, wherein God is ready to receive and entertain us, which are called in ſcripture "an accepted time, and day of ſalvation," 2 Cor. vi. 2. an *accepted time*, i. e. a time well pleaſing to God. *A day of ſalvation*, i. e. a day wherein the improvers of it may get ſalvation begun in pardoning and ſanctifying grace; and eternal ſalvation completed in heaven, made ſure to them. Now ſuch times and ſeaſons ſhould be carefully managed, that they be not loſt, as, alas! they are too many. I ſhall mention ſome of theſe ſeaſons.

I. The *preſent time*, when you have the goſpel-ordinances, and health and ſtrength to attend them: That is a ſeaſon carefully to be improven; and hence the Spirit of God ſaith ſo frequently, yea, no leſs than three times in this 3d chapter of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, *To-day, to-day, to day*, God cries to you, *To-day hear my voice*; but ſatan ſays to you, *To-morrow* is time enough. But ſurely, God's ſeaſon is the beſt. O ſinner! to-day thou art in health, to-morrow thou mayeſt be in ſickneſs; To-day thou art living, to-morrow thou mayeſt be dying; To-day thou art on earth, to-morrow thou mayeſt be in hell: To day Chriſt is ſmiling and inviting you to come unto him, but to-morrow he may be frowning, and ſentencing you to depart from him, never to return again. And ſhould not the preſent time, then, when you enjoy ordinances, and health to attend them, be duly improven?

II. The *time of youth* is a ſpecial ſeaſon of grace, Eccl. xii. 1. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of

of thy youth;" O young folk, this is an accepted time, and a day of ſalvation: It is a moſt advantageous opportunity for hearkening to Chriſt's voice; for, 1. Now the heart is more tender, and the will more pliable than afterwards: Now the heart is ſooner affected and melted for ſin, than afterwards; for old age turns ſtiff and inflexible. The branches of a young tree will bow, and train up any way, but when old, they will not ply. 2. Now you have not ſuch ſins to burden the conſcience, harden the heart, and hinder you from coming to Chriſt, as you will have afterwards. 3. Now your minds and thoughts are more free of cares and anxieties about the world, than they will be afterwards: and ſo more fit for cloſing and tranſacting with Chriſt in the goſpel. 4. It is a ſeaſon that God eſpecially regards. Under the law, he required the firſt fruits as his portion, and would have all the ſacrifices that were offered to him, to be young, and in their ſtrength, Exod. xxiii. 19. Lev. ii. 14. And ſtill he loves the ſeaſon of youth, and remembers the kindneſs of youth long afterward, Eccl. xii. 1. Jer. ii. 2, 3. The mourning, praying, and praiſing of young folk, is the moſt melodious muſic in God's ears: Wherefore, let the precious ſeaſon of youth be diligently improven. Are there not ſome young communicants here? O! improve this day of ſalvation, a time of youth is the moſt uſual ſeaſon of converſion, and acquaintance with Chriſt. If you look through the land, among the people of God, you will perhaps find ſcarce one of a hundred, but will date his converſion, and firſt cloſing with Chriſt, from the time of youth. If a tree do not bud or bloſſom, when young, it is a ſign that it is barren, and will not bear at all afterwards. O then! now in the days of youth lay a ſure foundation-ſtone; take heed to your firſt communicating; ſtrive for heart ſincerity in hearing Chriſt's voice, cloſing with the goſpel-offer, and covenanting with God.

III. A ſeaſon when people enjoy plenty and purity of goſpel-ordinances with peace and ſafety, ought carefully to be improven. And now ye have ſuch a ſeaſon, you have plenty of miniſters, plenty of ſermons, ſacraments, ſolemn calls, free offers, faithful warnings, earneſt

neſt intreaties, and powerful perſuaſions, and none to make you afraid. It is prophefied of the goſpel times, Pſal. lxviii 11. That "the Lord ſhall give the word, and great ſhall be the company of them that publiſh it." Now you have many faithful labourers; in every pariſh you have ſuch as publiſh the word, and preach the glad tidings of reconciliation: Many a time have you Chriſt crucified ſet forth before your eyes in the Lord's ſupper; and again, the Lord is to give you in this place a new occaſion for it. Theſe are precious ſeaſons, which our fathers ſometimes would have prized at a high rate; when they were put to ſeek their ſpiritual bread with the peril of their lives, "becauſe of the ſword in the wilderneſs." The Lord hath made his arm bare in behalf of the goſpel: He hath diſabled its enemies, ſettled the ark in its place, and ſtill continues plenty of pure ordinances, maugre all the contrivances and attempts of enemies for their oppreſſion. O! for hearts to value and improve ſuch precious opportunities.

IV. A time when God gives a people providential warnings, to awaken and excite them to attend his word and ordinances, is a ſeaſon to be improven. God hath oft threatened us with a bloody ſword; and now he is threatening us with the approaching of the peſtilence; that waſting ſtroke that lays heaps upon heaps, makes death to ride in triumph thro' the ſtreets. Many warnings of approaching judgments have we formerly miſimproven; and therefore, God may come upon us unawares, and ſurpriſe us with his judgments without warning. Well, while God is taking pains on us, and giving us warning at a diſtance, let us improve the ſeaſon, by hearkening to Chriſt's voice in the goſpel. "Let us be moved with fear, (like Noah) and provide an ark for the ſaving of our ſouls," before the flood of wrath approach. Nay, bleſſed be God, the ark is prepared to our hand, and there is a window opened in the ſide thereof for our entrance: let us take the wings of faith, and fly thither without delay.

V. A time when the *inward workings of the Spirit* on the conſcience, concur with the external diſpenſation

tion of the word and ſacraments, is a ſpecial ſeaſon to be improven. It is then, that a great and effectual door is opened both to miniſters and people. Paul had this door opened to him at Epheſus, amongſt many adverſaries, 1 Cor. xvi 9. Oh if it were ſo with us, we needed not fear all that advarſaries can do againſt the goſpel. But we have it to regret, that though God hath outwardly reſtrained adverſaries, yet a "great and effectual door" is not opened to us: Still the door is ſtrait both for miniſters and people: God's Spirit is greatly reſtrained in our day. If it be aſked, When is it that a wide or effectual door is opened? *Anſ.* It is only when the Spirit of God is poured out in a plentiful way, both on miniſters and people. When God's Spirit was thus poured out after Chriſt's aſcenſion, then both the graces and the gifts of the Spirit were communicated in a plentiful meaſure. Then miniſters had great light of knowledge and underſtanding, as well as the heat of zeal and love. It was eaſy for them to ſtudy and preach, they had clear uptakings of the matters of God, and a great readineſs and liberty of expreſſion. Their hearts were enlarged, their minds enlightened, their memories were ſtrengthened, and they had a door of utterance opened, i. e. a great facility in declaring of their minds; they were no way ſtraitened for proper matter or fit words; their hearts indited godly things, and their tongues were as the pen of a ready writer. Thus it is ſtill, when the ſpirit of God is remarkably poured out: then the preaching of the goſpel is both pleaſant and powerful; miniſters hearts are warmed, and peoples hearts are melted; miniſters mouths are opened, and peoples appetites enlarged. There is ſuch a thing as the Spirit of God his ſtriving with the hearts and conſciences of hearers, in and by the word, Gen. vi. 3. And when he thus ſtrives, it makes an effectual door, and a ſpecial ſeaſon of ſalvation. When the Spirit moves the waters of the ſanctuary, people ſhould not neglect then to ſtep in, and be healed Take heed you do not ſlight the ſtrivings of God's Spirit with you in any meaſure, leſt you provoke God to paſs ſuch a dreadful ſentence againſt you, as that Gen. vi. 3. "My ſpirit

rit ſhall no longer ſtrive with you." And if you loſe the precious ſeaſon of the Spirit's ſtriving, you perhaps will never recover it again.

Queſt. When is it that the Spirit of God ſtrives with ſinners, in and by the goſpel?

Anſ. 1. When he opens the eyes, and gives the man a diſcovery of his ſinful and miſerable ſtate by nature, and of the evil, heinouſneſs, and danger of his ſins; and ſo rivets and faſtens conviction on the heart and conſcience, that the arrows of the threatenings do ſtick, and the man is brought to thoughtfulneſs and anxiety about his future ſtate; and hence is made to cry, "What ſhall I do to be ſaved?" O! that is a ſeaſon which ought to be carefully improven.

2. The Spirit ſtrives, by making a man wholly diſſatisfied with his preſent ſtate, and all his earthly enjoyments, as long as he is in the dark about his ſoul's ſalvation. Though he may be in outward proſperity, he ſays, "All theſe things avail me nothing," while I am ready to be ſwallowed up by the wrath of God for ſin; ſurely there is no living, no abiding in this ſtate I am in. I am ſhut up in the priſon of unbelief, and the houſe is all on fire about my ears, I muſt break the priſon, and make my eſcape, otherwiſe I am undone for ever.

3. By making the man deſpair of help and deliverance by any thing in himſelf. Oh, ſaith he, I am a poor, miſerable, helpleſs creature! Neither my doing, nor ſuffering, can free me from wrath. I know no courſe, no contrivance of my own, that can relieve me. My relief muſt certainly come from another airth; for I can never work it for myſelf.

4. By humbling the man to the duſt for ſin, particularly for miſpending time, neglecting prayer, miſimproving ſermons, profaning ſabbaths and ſacraments, &c. O! ſays he, is there any creature more vile than I? Surely there is no toad more loathſome, no carrion more offenſive, no puddle more unclean, than my ſoul before God. Can ever the arms of mercy open to embrace ſuch a monſter of ſin as I have been? This is a choice ſeaſon, which ſhould be well improven.

5. By giving ſome light into the underſtanding, concerning the remedy provided for loſt ſinners. The ſoul begins, by the word, to diſcover ſomething of the fulneſs and ability of Chriſt, as a Saviour, ſo that it is made to think there is hope in Iſrael concerning this matter: My caſe, ſays the ſinner, is not ſo bad as the devils, for whom no remedy was ever provided.

6. By working ſome purpoſes and inclinations in the will toward the offered remedy; ſo that the ſoul makes its aims at Chriſt: Yea, is content to take any courſe for an intereſt in him. And therefore ſays oft with Paul, Acts ix. 6. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" What method ſhall I take to "be found in Chriſt, not having my own righteouſneſs?"

7. By determining the ſoul to a conſcientious and diligent uſe of the means, for getting Chriſt, and ſalvation through him.

8. By making a ſtir and commotion among the affections, and exciting earneſt and paſſionate deſires after Chriſt and ſalvation through him: So that the ſoul is made to ſay, "O that I knew where I might find him! O! when wilt thou come unto me?" I will ſpare no pains to get a meeting with him, I will ſeek him thro' the ſtreets and broad ways, and all the lanes of the city, crying, "Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth?"

Now, when the Spirit ſtrives with any of you, in any meaſure, it is a precious ſeaſon of grace, that ſhould be carefully obſerved and improven.

III. The *third* thing in my general method, is, to ſhew how theſe ſeaſons of grace ought to be improven by us.

1. By highly valuing and admiring the diſtinguiſhing goodneſs of God, in affording us ſuch days of grace and ſalvation. He deals not ſo with other nations: Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, and Papiſts, have not the goſpel-light and offers of grace which you have. Be thankful to God, eſpecially you that have more ſpecial and remarkable ſeaſons beyond others: You that have health and ſtrength, and youth on your ſide; you that have the Spirit of God ſtriving with you in the ordinances, your eyes opened, hearts melted, conſciences awakened,

awakened, affections moved; O bleſs God for his diſtinguiſhing mercies.

2. By believing firmly what Chriſt ſaith to you by the word, and attending carefully to it. Why? It is the word of the living God, more true, certain, and immoveable, than the foundations of the earth: Nay, heaven and earth will both ſooner paſs away, than one jot or one tittle of his word fall to the ground. Let your ears then be ſtopped againſt all the calls and ſolicitations of ſin, ſatan, and the world; and open only to precious Chriſt, ſaying with the Pſalmiſt, "I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak."

3. By applying cloſely to yourſelves what Chriſt ſaith, and meditating on it afterwards. When you hear any ſin threatened you are guilty of, or any duty preſſed that you neglect; bring that word cloſe home to your hearts, and ſay, This word is to me, let me not forget it. O let it abide with me when I go home, when I eat and drink, when I ly down and riſe up, when I go out and come in. Still think, you hear Chriſt's word ſounding in your ears, and that you hear him crying, "Awake thou that ſleepeſt, ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light." Open the door of thy heart, and let me in. "Riſe up, my love, my fair one, and come away." Why do you weary my patience, and let me ſtand ſo long neglected, "till my head is wet with the dew, and my locks with the drops of the night?"

4. By labouring to give kindly entertainment to the word, and the motions of Chriſt's Spirit on thy ſoul, preſently ſtriking in with conviction, ſubmitting to reproofs, and hearkening to his counſels, ſaying with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth." Say not to the Spirit's motions and ſtrivings with thee, as Felix did to Paul, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee. No, no, but forthwith give ear, yield and comply with the Spirit's ſtrivings, and Chriſt's voice: Be content immediately to have thy ſores launced, and thy wounds ſearched to the bottom; and when conviction and ſoul-trouble for ſin is begun, go not to ſtifle or quench it,

or ſeek haſtily to pluck God's arrows out of thy conſcience; but cheriſh and entertain the work of God's Spirit, by meditating on thy ſin, conſidering thy loſt eſtate by nature, thy inſufficiency to help thyſelf, together with the excellency and ſuitableneſs of the remedy which God has provided.

5. By frequent and fervent application to the throne of grace, begging, for Chriſt's ſake, that God may both begin and finiſh his work in the ſoul. Acknowledge that you are able of yourſelves to do nothing, and that it is by his grace only you can be ſaved; and when he begins by conviction, be thankful to him, and intreat, that theſe ſparks, kindled by the breath of God, may not be ſmothered, but blown up into a flame. And ſtill remember that the work is God's, though it be your duty to be caſting on fuel by prayer and meditation; yet the ſparks that kindle the fire may come from God's altar; the breath that blows it comes from heaven. Pray therefore, that the fire may come down, even a live coal from the altar, and that heaven's wind may blow on thy ſoul. Cry with the ſpouſe, "Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out." Let the north winds of the law come, and convince, and awaken; and the ſouth winds of the goſpel come, and refreſh, and comfort. Be earneſt, O convinced ſinner, in deprecating God's taking away his Spirit from you; make it a part of your daily prayer, to cry with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. li. 11. "Lord, take not thy holy Spirit from me." Lord forbid the new creature be ſtifled in the womb. O do thou quicken and preſerve it. Let theſe convictions terminate in my converſion here, and ſalvation hereafter. Lord, thou art a rock, thy work is perfect: haſt thou begun, and wilt thou not alſo make an end? O! ſuffer not theſe tender fruits to be nipped in the bud, or blaſted in the bloſſom, either by ſatan's ſtoft-winds, or the world's chilling blaſts: But, O! preſerve them to maturity, to the praiſe and glory of thy grace.

IV. The next thing is, the reaſons of the doctrine;

trine: why we ſhould ſo carefully improve our ſeaſons of grace.

1. Becauſe God looks for it, and expects it at our hand. When God plants trees in his vineyard, waters and takes pains on them, he looks for fruit from them, Luke xiii. We ſee what the Lord ſays of Judah, Iſa. v. 1, 2. "My well-beloved (i. e. Chriſt) hath a vineyard (i. e. the church of the Jews) in a very fruitful hill: (i. e. a good ſoil, furniſhed with all poſſible means to make it fruitful:) And he fenced it, (i. e. protected it by his providence, from the incurſion of enemies) he gathered out the ſtones thereof, (i. e. removed out of it whatever was noxious or hurtful, perhaps the idol-gods, put theſe out of the land) he planted it with the choiceſt vine: (i. e. with pure ordinances, and inſtitutions of worſhip, good government, and diſcipline:) He built a tower in the midſt of it, (i. e. for its defence, viz. the ſtrong city of Jeruſalem in midſt of the land, which was built as a city compact together, whither the tribes went up for worſhip.) Alſo he made a wine-preſs therein; (i. e. the temple and altar continually running with the blood of the ſacrifices.) Now, after all, it is ſaid, "He looked that it ſhould bring forth grapes," which doth not import that God was uncertain of the event; but denotes what is juſt and equal, and what in ſuch caſes ought to be. Surely a vineyard, ſo attended and furniſhed, ought to bring forth fruit, anſwerable to all the acts of God's care and grace towards it.

And to bring the matter home to our caſe, God hath been at ſpecial care to plant a vineyard in this land: We have a good ſoil, well fenced, the ſtones gathered out, idolatry and ſuperſtition removed, a choice vine planted, pure ordinances ſet up, enemies diſabled that laid it waſte. God has built towers, and made wine preſſes to us, viz. the ſacraments, and eſpecially the Lord's ſupper, where the blood of Chriſt, our great ſacrifice, doth run plentifully to us, for pardon, healing, and waſhing. Now, doth not God look for grapes? Is it not juſt that we ſhould bring forth fruit, anſwerable to all theſe privileges? Alas! for the moſt part, there is nothing but wild grapes with us; little

little ſuitable fruit of our ſolemn communion-days. You may ſee, what is the reſult of fruſtrating the divine expectations, Iſa. v. 5, 6. Nothing but blaſting, withering, ruin, and deſolation.

2. Becauſe of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of the ſeaſon of grace: None can tell how long it will laſt. You cannot promiſe it will continue as long as your lives, (tho' even theſe be moſt uncertain.) No; your ſpecial ſeaſon and day of grace may end this very day, or at this communion-occcaſion, though you ſhould happen to live many years after this. It is likely, God is ſaying to ſome hearing me, "To-day hearken to my voice, repent, and cloſe with Chriſt my Son, or be henceforth hardened and undone for ever." O ſinner, this night thy day of grace may ceaſe; God may this day cauſe ſome of your hearts to warm by the word, others to tremble, others to mourn, others to purpoſe and reſolve. Well, if you do not lay hold on, and improve this ſeaſon, and hearken to Chriſt's voice, you may never get the like occaſion again; nay, even though you ſhould wiſh for it. Chriſt ſaith, Luke xvii. 22. "The time ſhall come, when you ſhall deſire to ſee one of the days of the Son of man, and ſhall not ſee it." This may be one of the days of the Son of man to you; for now Chriſt is offering himſelf, and preſſing ſalvation on you, and ſtriving by his Spirit (I hope) with ſome of you. Well, if you neglect to open your hearts to Chriſt this day, God may ſet a ſeal on them to-morrow, that they ſhall never be opened. You may afterwards deſire another of ſuch days as this; you may wiſh for one of the offers of that Saviour, for one drop of that blood you ſlighted, for one knock of his Spirit at the door of your heart, which formerly you neglected; for one of his motions or ſtrivings with you; and yet it may never be granted. With ſome the day of grace is longer, with others ſhorter; with ſome it ends in childhood, with others it ends in youth; and with ſome few it laſts to old age: But, O ſinner! thou haſt no reaſon to expect the continuance of it a moment after this day.

3. Becauſe if you do not improve your day of grace, you loſe your ſouls. You may compare the text with verſe

verſe 11th of the chapter; "becauſe they hardened their hearts, and would "not hear his voice," in their day of grace, it is ſubjoined, "I ſware in my wrath, they ſhall not enter into my reſt." We ſee the ſad caſe Jeruſalem was in when they loſt their day of grace, Luke xix. 41, 42. "When he was near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." Here it is ſaid, "Chriſt wept," (orig. *Eclauſe*) which denotes a weeping with lamentation. "He wept bitterly," to let you all know what a ſad and deplorable thing it is, for a people, city, or perſon, to loſe their day of grace. The words he ſpeaks are uttered in a weeping ſtrain. Abrupt expreſſions come now and then from his mouth; he drops now a word, and then a tear; he would ſpeak, but his weeping ſtops his voice, "If thou hadſt known, even thou." *Thou* is reduplicate, or twice expreſt, "Thou even thou." As if he had ſaid, Thou ancient city, the city of David, thou ſeat of the temple, and of the ſacrifices: "O if thou hadſt known." Then he adds, "at leaſt in this thy day." They had enjoyed many leſſer days of grace, when they had faithful prophets dealing with them; theſe they perſecuted and deſpiſed, and ſo loſt theſe days: But theſe were but leſſer days, which did not finally determine the ſtate of that city; for they were to have another day, which is here called, "this their day," i. e. the day wherein the Son of God was to come among them, and preach the goſpel to them, "three years and a half:" That was a ſpecial day of grace, and the day that determined their ſtate; for ſince they did not improve it, "the things of their peace were hid from their eyes." God would deal no more with them, but left them to deſtruction. O ſinner! O communicants! ſo will it fare with you, if you let your day of grace go over: Night will come on, wherein none can work, you will ſtumble in the dark, and fall headlong into the pit for ever.

4. Becauſe God keeps a ſtrict account of every hour and minute of your day of grace, that you trifle away

away; for he reckons it very precious, whatever you think of it. When God lights the candle of the goſpel, he expects you ſhould work by it; and he will not ſuffer this precious candle to burn without obſervation; nay, he counts every hour and minute it burns, and every hour and minute his Spirit ſtrives, and will make you reckon for them at laſt. God takes not ſuch ſtrict notice of times of darkneſs and ignorance; for it is ſaid, he winks at ſinners living under them, Acts xvii. 30. i. e. He doth not ſo narrowly mark their diligence; but when he ſends times of light, and of his Spirit's ſtriving with ſinners, he will not wink at one hour or minute, but exactly ſet down every ſermon you hear, every communion you ſee, every call, every intreaty, every threatning, every reproof, every conviction and warning you get, whether by ordinances or providences, whether by conſcience or by his Spirit. And, O! what a dreadful libel will theſe make up againſt you at the great day, if you neglect your day of grace.

V. APPLICATION.

Uſe I. For *information*. We may hence ſee, that it is not the bare enjoyment of the goſpel, and communion ſeaſons that will make us happy, but the right improvement of the day of grace, which we enjoy therein.

Uſe II. For *lamentation*. We may hence take occaſion to bewail the ſad caſe of many that neglect and loſe the day of their merciful viſitation. It is ſaid, Jer. viii. 7. "The ſtork knoweth her appointed times, the turtle, the crane, and the ſwallow, obſerve the time of their coming," &c. And we are bid go learn of the ant, Prov. vi. 6. "that provides her meat in ſummer, and gathers her food in harveſt," while the weather is good and dry, and food may be had. So that we ſee the brutes and ſilly inſects obſerve their ſeaſons. But, alas! many men neglect and forget theirs; they let their ſummer and harveſt-days paſs, without making any proviſion for eternity. Oh! how many among us may take up that ſad lamentation, Jer. viii. 20. "Our harveſt

veſt is paſt, our ſummer is ended, and we are not ſaved!" O that we could weep over many, as Chriſt did over Jeruſalem, for loſing their day of grace!

Queſt. Who are theſe that thus loſe their day of grace?

Anſ. It is hard to be very particular on this head; I ſhall only give ſome general characters of ſuch perſons.

1. Thoſe who have ſat many years under pure and powerful ordinances, and were never affected thereby; but ſtill remain dead and hardened under the moſt awakening calls and plaineſt reproofs. Theſe ſeem to be given over to ruin, Prov. xxix. 1. "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall be ſuddenly deſtroyed, and that without remedy."

2. Thoſe who have had many ſecret motions and operations of the Spirit on their ſouls, to no effect; many purpoſes and reſolutions to good, and all evaniſhed; many of the Spirit's ſtrivings, and all reſiſted: Theſe are likely to be given over, Ezek. xxiv. 13. "Becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee." When God's Spirit offered to cleanſe that people from their ſin, they, like Lot's wife, ſtill hankered after it, and would not part therewith.

3. Thoſe who have greatly grieved the Spirit of God, by venturing on ſin againſt the light of their conſciences, and the Spirit's motions, and ſo are turned wilful and reſolute in ſinning; ſuch have the ſymptoms of rejection, Hoſ. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone."

4. Thoſe who are ſo forward and bent upon a ſinful courſe, that they can endure no reproof or controul therein, but hate them in their hearts, who ſeek to reclaim them: Thoſe have the ſymptoms of ruin upon them, Prov. xv. 10. Amos v. 10.

5. When perſons are ſo far hardened in ſin, that God ceaſeth to be a reprover to them, and ſtrikes their conſciences ſo dumb and ſenſeleſs, that they do not accuſe

cuſe nor challenge them: It is a ſad ſign of up-giving, Ezek. iii. 26. Hoſ. iv. 17.

6. When repentance is hid from people's eyes, ſo that they are not affected with the view of their ſins, when they are laid before them; no diſpenſation of providence, no token of God's anger, neither judgments nor mercies, rods nor threatenings; nay, the flames of hell flaſhed in the ſinner's face, do not breed any remorſe in their conſciences, nor relenting in their hearts for ſin: When people arrive at this height, it is a ſad ſign that they are given up to wrath, Iſa. xlii. 25.

III. Next uſe ſhall be of *examination*. O try, if ye have improven your day of grace, ſo as to hearken to Chriſt's voice, and comply with his gracious offers, O communicants, it is highly your intereſt to know this, that you may come with chearfulneſs, and feaſt with your Redeemer at his table. Now try it by theſe marks,

1. Had you never the experience of Chriſt's Spirit's work in opening your ear, and inclining your heart to cloſe with his offers in the goſpel? Do you experimentally know the heinouſneſs and multitude of your ſins? Do you know ſomething of the terribleneſs of God's wrath due to you for theſe ſins? Have you ſeen your ſoul's need of Chriſt, as a man, purſued for his life, ſeeth his need of a city or refuge? Have you ſeen yourſelves loſt and dead men, if you get not into Chriſt? Have you felt ardent deſires after Chriſt, and been made to ſay, "Give us Chriſt, or elſe we die?" Have you been content to take this lovely Saviour on any terms, to part with all for this *pearl of price*, and to count all but *loſs and dung*, to be found in him.

2. Can you ſay, that Chriſt's word and ordinances where you firſt heard his voice ſpeaking to you, are ſtill precious and lovely to you for his ſake? And hence you are made ſometimes to cry out with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hoſts! My heart and my fleſh crieth out for the living God." Sweet ſermons, ſweet communion-days, lovely occaſions, when the bridegroom's voice is to be heard.

3. Are you filled with low thoughts of yourſelves, and

and all your own doings and performances, and with high thoughts of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs! And do you turn out all Chriſt's rivals out of your hearts, and undervalue the world and all things in it beſides him, who is "the chiefeſt among ten thouſands, and fairer than the ſons of men."

4. Do you find a great alteration, and gracious change on your ſouls, ſince the time you heard his voice? Doth Chriſt ſit as a refiner with you, changing both heart and life to the better? Are *old things paſt away*, old luſts, old thoughts, old deſires, old cuſtoms, old ways? And are all things with you become new? You that formerly ſet light by Chriſt and his voice, and admired the world and its flattering pleaſures, and ſaid of Chriſt, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" Do you now value him, ſeek nearneſs to him in duties, enquire for him in ordinances, yea, meditate on him in the night-watches, and, when ye awake, do you find your hearts with him? And is ſin, that diſpleaſeth him, your greateſt terror? Then ſurely you are among that bleſt company that have heard your Redeemer's voice in your day of grace, and you may come with joy to his table.

IV. Uſe of *exhortation*. And here I exhort you all, in the name of Chriſt, to improve your ſeaſon of grace. "To-day, while it is called to-day, O hear his voice;" and to-morrow, when he invites, O come unto his table. Hearers of the goſpel, "This is now the accepted time, this is the day of ſalvation." What do you reſolve to do? Chriſt is now come to cry and lift up his voice to this whole congregation, to try you once more if you will hear his voice, before your day of grace end. Well, his voice is to you all, I know none of you excluded, if you do not exclude yourſelves.

1. O carnal earthly-minded ſoul, that has been a drudge to the world, and a ſtranger to Chriſt all thy days, his voice is to you this day: O come hear his voice, and cloſe a bargain with him, it will be the beſt bargain ever you made.

2. O profane ſinner, drunkard, ſwearer, liar, ſabbath-breaker, whoremonger, ſinner as black as hell,

hearken to Chriſt's voice this day, and come and be ſaved from thy ſins: Why will you ſtop your ears, and chuſe to die in your ſins?

3. O hard hearted ſinner, that never waſt affected all thy life for the ſinfulneſs and miſery of thy natural eſtate, that never had a ſore heart for offending God, that never mourned for one ſin, Chriſt's voice is this day to thee, Iſa. xlvi. 12. "Hearken unto me, ye ſtout hearted, that are far from righteouſneſs."

4. O prayerleſs ſinner, that never bowed a knee in ſecret, to cry for pardon of ſin, and an intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, to ſave thee from the wrath to come, lend your ear this day, and hearken to Chriſt's ſweet voice, while he calls, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near," Iſa. lv. 6.

5. Condemned rebels in the hands of juſtice, ſentenced to die, and ready to be taken out to execution: O hear Chriſt's voice this day, and your ſouls ſhall live.

6. Slaves to ſin and ſatan, who have many times heard the devil's voice, anſwered his calls, and complied readily with his temptations; will you hear the Redeemer's voice for once, and comply with his counſels before it be too late? Why will ye ſhut your ear againſt the lovely Saviour, and obey the voice of your ſoul-deſtroyer?

7. Obſtinate ſinner, that could never hitherto, either by the word or the rod, by miniſters or providences, be prevailed upon to leave one of all thy ſins, O be perſuaded to hear Chriſt's voice this day, and no longer harden thy heart.

8. O goſpel-ſlighter, that has many a day refuſed Chriſt's offers, ſpurned againſt his bowels, trampled on his blood, crucified him at the communion table: O come, hearken this day to his voice, and he will let you ſee, that though your caſe be ſad, yet it is not deſperate; for *he hath found a ranſom.*

9. Hypocrites and formaliſts, that have had a maſk of religion, but have all your days been diſſembling and dealing deceitfully with God; come, deal ingenuouſly and ſincerely with him for once, and hearken

to

to his voice, give him your hearts, as well as your outward man.

10. Backſliders and covenant-breakers, who have broke many a vow, ſlighted many an engagement, and ſinned againſt many a reſolution: O hear Chriſt's voice this day, when he calls to you, "Turn, ye backſliding children," come to me, and "I will heal your backſlidings, and love you freely."

11. Poor plagued diſeaſed ſouls, who are groaning under many heart-plagues, and ſoul-diſtreſſes, ſuch as atheiſm, pride, hardneſs, formality, &c. come hearken to Chriſt's voice, and he will be your Phyſician.

12. Weary and heavy-laden ſinners, who are like to ſink with the burden of your guilt, come hearken to Chriſt's voice this day, and he "will give reſt to your ſouls."

13. Purſued ſhelterleſs ſinners, who are afraid of the avenger of blood, hearken to Chriſt's voice, and fly to the city of refuge. Many motives and arguments might I uſe with you, to hear the voice of lovely Jeſus, while he calls to day.

I. Conſider how earneſt Chriſt is to perſuade you to hear his voice; he ſtands at your doors, and knocks both by his word and Spirit; yea, he waits and knocks after many repulſes and affronts, and promiſes that all former ſlights and refuſals ſhall be forgiven, if ye will yet hearken and cloſe with him. How oft doth he repeat his intreaties, Luke xiii. 34. "How oft would I have gathered you!" Yea, he weeps for ſinners obſtinacy, Luke xix. 41. Strange! Doth he gain any thing by your hearkening to his voice? What means this earneſtneſs? It is all, O ſinners, on your account. For (1.) He knows better than any the worth of your ſouls, and that a world cannot redeem them when loſt. (2) He knows well the miſerable ſtate of your ſouls without him; it is moſt ſad and deplorable at preſent, and will be much more ſo thro' endleſs eternity: For if you hear not Chriſt's voice, you will die in your ſins, and be tormented in them for ever. (3.) Chriſt is ſo earneſt, because he knows the difficulty of winning ſouls. He knows ſatan has great power and intereſt with

with ſouls, to blind, harden, and delude them, and that it is not eaſy to undeceive them, and pull them out of his gripe; and therefore he deals and ſtrives ſo earneſtly with ſouls to gain them.

II. Take a ſerious view of the ſtate of your ſouls: While you ſtop your ears againſt Chriſt's charming voice; it is inexpreſſibly miſerable. For, 1. Your ſouls are deſtitute of all that is good, Eph ii 12. You are as poor and wretched creatures as ever God made; you are without life, without grace, without peace, without pardon, without comfort, without righteouſneſs, without ranſom, without the favour of God, without the lovely image of God, without the Spirit of God, and without all happineſs. 2. Your ſouls are in the poſſeſſion of Satan, where Chriſt is ſhut out, the devil is let in; and where he dwells, there he hath an abſolute dominion: he uſes all the faculties of the ſoul as his tools and inſtruments, Eph. ii. 2. Oh! would not any man reckon it an unſpeakable miſery, to be in a houſe ſhut up with the devil? 3. Where Chriſt is ſhut out, the plague of ſin doth rage, and its peſtilential marks do daily appear; what madneſs is it then to refuſe to hearken to the voice of this bleſſed cleanſer? 4. The fire of God's wrath is kindled there, where Chriſt is refuſed; and what diſtraction is it to ſhut out Chriſt, whoſe blood only can quench this fire? 5. If you do not hearken to Chriſt, you have no way to prevent eternal deſtruction; for there is no advocate, no ſurety, to interpoſe for you, if he be refuſed. Surely, the thoughts of appearing before an angry God after death, muſt be terrible to a Chriſtleſs ſoul; "For who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can abide with everlaſting burnings?" I have read of a certain king of Hungary, who who was a Chriſtian; and being on a time marvellous ſad and heavy, his brother, who was a briſk and gallant man, would needs know what ailed him. "Oh brother (ſaith he) I have been a great ſinner againſt God, and I know not how I ſhall appear before him, when he comes to judgment." His brother anſwered, "Theſe are but melancholy thoughts," and ſo made light of them, as courtiers uſe to do. The king replied nothing

nothing at that time; but the cuſtom of that country was, (the government thereof being abſolute) that if the executioner ſounded a trumpet before any man's door, the man was preſently to be led to execution. The king, in the dead time of the night, ſent his executioner, and cauſed him ſound his trumpet before his brother's door, who, hearing and ſeeing the meſſenger of death, ran quickly, and ſprang in trembling into his brother's preſence, falls down on his knees, and beſeeches the king to let him know wherein he had offended him. "O brother, (anſwered the king) you never offended me, but loved me: And (ſaid he) is the ſight of an earthly executioner ſo terrible to thee; and ſhall not I, who am ſo great a ſinner, fear much more to be brought to the judgment-ſeat of an angry God?" What ſoul can think on this without terror, that hath not hearkened to Chriſt's voice in the goſpel?

III. If you do not hearken to Chriſt's voice in the goſpel, it had been better for you never to have heard the goſpel at all; for your guilt is dreadfully aggravated hereby, and your miſery will be the greater, both here and hereafter. We may gather this from Rev. vi. where, after the *white horſe*, (i. e. Chriſt with the goſpel neglected) comes the *red horſe* of war, the *black horſe* of famine, and the *pale horſe* of peſtilence. Neglecting to hear Chriſt in the goſpel, uſhers in all outward miſeries like a flood, Jer vi. 8. "Be thou inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt my ſoul depart from thee, leſt I make thee deſolate, a land not inhabited." Then again, how ſad will your caſe be at a tribunal, and through all eternity? The devils, the Turks, the Heathens, and your own conſciences, will bitterly upbraid you in hell, for refuſing to hear Chriſt's voice in the goſpel.

IV. Chriſt will not hear your cries in the time of miſery, if you neglect his voice in the time of mercy, Prov. i. 24, 25, 26. Now Chriſt's voice is ſweet, and full of mercy; but remember, O goſpel-ſlighters, the time is at hand, when you will hear Chriſt ſpeaking in another tone; no more "open to me, and hearken to my voice," poor ſoul: but "depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire," &c.

V. This

V. This may be the laſt ſeaſon you will hear Chriſt's voice ſpeaking to you; this may be the laſt communion and the laſt call that Chriſt intends to give you. This may be the laſt day of grace, and the laſt time that his Spirit will ſtrive with you. If you ſtop your ear, or harden your heart this day, there may follow an eternal dead ſilence, and God's Spirit never ſtrive any more with you, and ſo your day of grace is loſt, and your ſoul loſt for ever. O young folk, what ſay ye to it? A ſeaſon of youth is an accepted time, and a day of ſalvation: for the Lord's ſake do not loſe it. You have now plenty of ſermons, ſacraments, and goſpel offers; you have Chriſt crucified ſet before your eyes to affect your hearts, and bring you to a compliance with his calls. You have alſo loud warnings this day from God's providence, and (I hope) ſome of you the inward workings of God's Spirit on your conſciences, concurring with theſe outward means. Well, then, give kindly entertainment to Chriſt's voice in this ſeaſon of grace; while he yet ſtands beſeeching you, come hearken to his voice, and accept of him as your Surety; enter into covenant with him this night, and come to his table, and ſeal it to-morrow. O ſinner, turn your back on the devil, leave your ſins, and ſtop your courſe, and come and be reconciled to God thro' this peace-maker, who is ſtanding waiting to be employed. Well, what anſwer ſhall I carry back to my Maſter, that ſent me to deal with you for this end? Shall I go and complain? "Lord, they are a company of obſtinate ſinners thou ſenteſt me to; I entreated them to hearken to thy voice, and leave their ſins; but there was no concern, no fear, no ſenſe of ſin among them. Had I been to preach to beaſts, ſtocks or ſtones, they would have been as much moved as they. Alas! I have ſpent my ſtrength in vain, my voice and lungs for nought; I thought thy ſweet entreaties and charming voice would have melted their hearts; but neither comforts nor terrors had any effect.

Or ſhall I have ground to ſay? "Lord, I have offered ſinners a Redeemer, and entreated them to cloſe with him. Though they ſtood long out againſt thy threatenings,

threatenings, yet when they heard thy entreaties, their hearts began to relent, ſome began to ſigh, others to weep, others to long after Chriſt; and I hope they are gone home to make a perſonal covenant with him this night, and ſincerely deſign to return and ſeal it to-morrow." God grant this may be the event. Amen.

SERMON XVI.

A Sermon after the Communion.

The Believer's Dignity in being an heir of God.

Gal. iv. 7. *Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon: and if a ſon, then an heir of God through Chriſt.*

IN this chapter the apoſtle doth hold forth the happy ſtate of believing Gentiles under New-Teſtament times; that it is ever preferable to that of the believing Jews under the Old Teſtament. The Jewiſh church he compares to a child in minority, that is, under tutors and governors, and is acquainted only with the firſt rudiments of religion; and likewiſe to the ſtate of a ſervant, that is ſtill kept under ſubjection and bondage: for that church was always in a ſervile condition, having been under the heavy yoke of a great many ceremonial rites and obſervances. But our bleſſed Lord Jeſus, by his coming into the world, hath broke off that yoke from his people's necks, and hath brought them under a more ſpiritual and agreeable diſpenſation; yea, he hath ſent forth his Spirit into their hearts. Upon which account the apoſtle concludes them to be happy, yea, even children of God, "Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant," &c.

In the text we have the happy ſtate of the believing Galatians briefly repreſented. *1ſt, Negatively, Thou art no more a ſervant;* i. e. no more in a ſtate of ſervile ſubjection to the law, and to the Moſaic rites and obſervations. 2. *Poſitively, Thou art a ſon!* i. e. thou haſt attained to a more excellent ſtate of liberty, like to that of ſons who have come to ripe age. He means not, that believers under the Old Teſtament had not that privilege of being children of God; no, believers then were really ſons, but kept in ſuch a ſtate, and trained up under ſuch hard diſcipline, that they ſeemed more like ſervants than ſons. But (ſaith he) to you believers under the New Teſtament, the diſcipline is changed, and you have attained to more honourable ſon like treatment. 3. We have an inference from this privilege of ſon ſhip, "And if a ſon, then an heir of God through Chriſt." Among men only, the eldeſt ſon is heir, but all God's children are heirs.

In which we have two things: 1. The high dignity and preferment of God's children; they are heirs of God, i. e. they have a free right and title to eternal life, and all the gifts and bleſſings of God; yea, to the infinite God himſelf, who is the believer's chief good and portion. 2. The way of obtaining this dignity and happineſs, through Chriſt, and the merit of his blood: He is God's eternal Son, and heir of all things, and being our Surety, he, by his obedience and ſufferings, hath purchaſed a title to believers, to be God's ſons by adoption, and joint heirs with him of the heavenly inheritance: "He is our elder brother, and is not aſhamed to call us brethren." The inheritance is his by nature, but ours by grace.

From the words thus explained, obſerve,

I. That the privileges of believers under the New Teſtament, do exceed theſe who lived under the Old. The legal ſtate was more ſervile, but the goſpel ſtate is more filial.

II. That though God hath one Son only by eternal generation; viz. our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; yet he hath many ſons by grace and adoption, viz. believers.

III. That thoſe who have the Spirit of God dwelling in

in their hearts, and exciting them to prayer, have a good evidence of their ſon ſhip, and filial relation to God. This is clear, from the connection of this verſe with the preceding.

IV. The doctrine that I am to inſiſt on at this time, is, "That it is the great honour and privilege of all true believers, to be the children and heirs of God thro' Jeſus Chriſt."

This is confirmed from that parallel text, Rom. viii. 16, 17.

The method for handling this ſubject, ſhall be, (1.) To enquire in what ſenſe believers are the children of God. (2.) In what reſpect they are called heirs. (3.) What is the heritage they are intitled to. (4.) How it is they attain to this privilege. (5.) To ſhow the wonderful free grace of God, in granting ſuch a glorious privilege to believers, as to be his children and heirs. (6.) Make improvement of the whole.

I. As to the firſt, In what ſenſe believers are the children of God.

1. *Negatively*, It is not to be meant here, that they are his children only, (1.) In reſpect of *creation*, for ſo all men are God's children, Mal. ii. 10. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" Had believers no farther intereſt in God than this, they ſhould have but little comfort; for in this ſenſe God is alſo Father to the devils and wicked men, for "he made them; but he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhow them no favour." Nor (2.) Is it to be meant, that they are his children only by providence; for ſo he is to all, Deut. xxxii. 6. "Is he not thy Father that bought thee?" i. e. hath redeemed thee from ſlavery, and conferred great bleſſings on thee. Nor (3.) Is it to be underſtood of their being his children by profeſſion, or external covenant-engagements; for ſo all the members of the viſible church are, Iſa. i. 2.

2. *Poſitively*, Believers are the children of God, by way of ſpecial grace, and that in theſe ſeveral reſpects, (1.) In reſpect of *election*, God has choſen and predeſtinated them from eternity to be his children and heirs,

upon whom he will entail the kingdom of heaven, Eph. i. 5. (2.) In reſpect of *regeneration*, he dignifies them with a new birth, working a gracious change upon them, infuſing in them a ſupernatural principle of holineſs, whereby they become like their heavenly Father, and ſo they are ſaid to be "begotten and born of God," Jam. i. 18. 1 John iii. 9. (3.) They are his children by adoption; which is an act of God's free grace, whereby he aſſumes thoſe into the number of his children, who were not ſo naturally, but were ſtrangers and aliens: Yea, he takes thoſe who were enemies, and of the family of hell, into the family of heaven; and graciouſly entitles them to all the advantages, dignities, and privileges of children. As, for inſtance, He educates, brings them up, and makes proviſion for them, as for ſons, Iſa. xlvi. 3. Matth. vi. 32. Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. 2. He allows them a ſhare in his fatherly love and compaſſion, together with the protection and attendance of ſons, Jer. xxxi. 20. Heb i. 14. 3. He frees them from a ſervile ſtate, or any baſe and drudgery work, and endues them with a free ſpirit, Rom. viii. 15. 4. They have the chaſtiſement of ſons, which is moſt needful, Deut. viii. 5. Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8. 5. He allows them free acceſs to, and a filial confidence with him in prayer; hence, in the verſe preceding my text, the apoſtle ſaith, "Becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." And, *laſtly*, He entitles them to the inheritance of ſons, as in the text, *If ſons, then heirs of God.* And this leads to,

II. The *ſecond* head; viz. *In what reſpect believers are called heirs.* And for the better illuſtration hereof, I ſhall ſhow wherein temporal and ſpiritual heirs do agree, and wherein they differ.

I. They agree, and reſemble one another, in theſe things:

1. He that is an heir of an eſtate, hath his title freely conveyed to him; he pays not for it, becauſe he has it by birth. So believers, who are ſpiritual heirs, have the title to their inheritance freely; and as they have nothing to pay for it, ſo it is given to them "without

"without money, and without price." And though they have not a title to it by their natural birth, yet by their new birth, they become the ſons of God, and heirs of heaven.

2. They who are rightful heirs of an eſtate, have the ſureſt title of any other, becauſe it is built upon nature: A father may frown upon his ſon and heir for his fault, but doth not eaſily diſinherit him; nor will he turn him out of doors, as he doth a ſervant, for his offence. So believers, who are God's adopted children and heirs, have a moſt ſure title to the heavenly inheritance. Though God may chaſtiſe them, yet he will not diſinherit them; Pſal. lxxxix. 32, 33, 34. "I will viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod:—Nevertheleſs, my loving kindneſs I will not take utterly from him.—My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." Our title to the inheritance by the ſecond covenant, is far ſurer than Adam's was by the firſt: for when he offended, God treated him as a ſervant, and turned him out of doors: But the believer, who is become a child and heir by Jeſus Chriſt, is better ſecured by the ſecond covenant; for he hath not only God's word, God's writ, and God's oath, to confirm it, but he hath the Mediator's blood ſealing his charter, and an earneſt of the inheritance already given him; viz God's Spirit put into his heart, 2 Cor. i. 22. So that his right and title is indefeaſible, and can never be altered.

3. An heir's title to an inheritance is reckoned more honourable than his, who obtains it another way. So the believer's title is moſt honourable, being made heirs of God, and co-heirs with his own Son Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. viii. 17. Chriſt alone is the natural Son, and has the primary right to the inheritance; but believers, by adoption, are aſſigned to a ſhare, and made co heirs with him. So that Chriſt and believers do, as it were, divide heaven betwixt them; they have the ſame Father, dwell in the ſame houſe, ſit at the ſame table, reign on the ſame throne, partake of the ſame glory. O! What honour is this, which is put on worms of the earth? John xvii. 22, 24. John xx. 17. Rev. iii. 21.

21. Chriſt indeed being our elder brother, his inheritance is double, and his power and glory is far greater than the glorified ſaints and angels, "inſomuch as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they," Heb. i. 4. Eph. i. 22.

4. An heir, during his minority, hath not the actual poſſeſſion of his inheritance, as being incapable to manage it, and therefore hath tutors and curators appointed him; ſo a believer, though an heir of heaven, hath not the poſſeſſion of the inheritance, while here. This life is the time of his *minority*, and Jeſus Chriſt and the Holy Spirit are his tutors and curators, until he arrive at ripe age, and the years of his *majority*, when he will be fully "meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light," and then he enters upon the immediate poſſeſſion of all that is promiſed to him.

5. An heir of an eſtate, though he want the poſſeſſion for a time, yet he hath a preſent maintenance allowed him out of it, ſuitable ſo his ſtation and circumſtances; ſo believers, during their minority in this world, have a ſufficient maintenance granted them, out of that great inheritance promiſed to, and provided for them. As for *temporal things*, they have a competency ſecured to them while here: "Their bread ſhall be given them, and their water ſhall be ſure." And for *ſpiritual things*, they ſhall have as much grace, ſtrength, comfort, and joy, as will bear their charges, until the time appointed come, when they ſhall enter upon the full poſſeſſion of all.

6. An heir of a good eſtate may be ſomewhat ſtraitened in his circumſtances for a time, becauſe of burdens on the eſtate, or ſome neceſſary reſtrictions laid upon him; yet comforts himſelf with the hopes of a plentiful eſtate at length: So the heirs of promiſe may be under many ſtraits and difficulties while here, under burdens of corruption, fears of wrath, and hidings of God's face. They oft complain of little grace, weak faith, languiſhing deſires, and of faint diſcoveries of God and Chriſt, and the inviſible things of the other world: Yet nevertheleſs they ſhould not murmur, but encourage themſelves in the faithful promiſe and ſure right they

they have obtained in Chriſt; and be thankful, if as much be allowed them out of the inheritance, as will bear their charges to heaven, where they ſhall be ſupplied to the full, forget all their ſtraits, and remember their poverty no more.

7. An heir, whatever his preſent ſtraits and circumſtances be, is a reſpectful and honourable perſon; and they who know what he is born to, and what his expectations are, do put reſpect upon him: ſo believers, however mean and ſtraitened they be, during their minority in this world, are very honourable perſons, "the excellent ones in the earth," and, in many reſpects, "more excellent than their neighbours;" they are heirs of a great inheritance, and, upon this account, ſhould be honoured by thoſe among whom they live; for though they make no great outward appearance at preſent, yet, in a little, they ſhall be crowned with glory and honour.

II. *Temporal* and *ſpiritual* heirs do differ in theſe things:

1. Temporal heirs, however rich they be, are only heirs of a corruptible ſpot of earth; but believers are heirs of an "inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for them." And what is earth to heaven?

2. Many heirs, here on earth, never come to the actual poſſeſſion of their eſtates; for they may be ſquandered away, or loſt by the ill-management of their parents or tutors; or they may be taken from them by oppreſſion or violence; and oftentimes death comes and ſnatches away the young heirs before they attain to ripe age; ſo that they never win to the poſſeſſion. But heaven's heirs will all certainly get poſſeſſion of their inheritance; their tutors will not loſe nor miſmanage it to them; no enemy can ſeize it by violence; nor "thief break through and ſteal." And death will be ſo far from depriving them of the poſſeſſion of their inheritance; that it brings them to the immediate and full fruition thereof, through a glorious eternity.

3. A temporal heir doth not fully poſſeſs the heritage till the father dies; but the ſpiritual heir doth poſſeſs

poſſeſs it fully in his father's life-time. Our eternal Father lives for ever; and this doth not hinder the heirs poſſeſſing: What a myſtery is here! In temporal heritages the father dies to give place to the ſon: but here the Son dies to bring the heirs of heaven to live and poſſeſs with the Father.

4. When a temporal heir comes to the poſſeſſion, he can enjoy the inheritance but a ſhort while; for death ſoon comes and diſpoſſeſſes him. But the ſpiritual heir, when he gets poſſeſſion of his inheritance, becomes immortal, and is for ever out of the reach of death.

III. The *third* head in the method was, to ſhew what the heritage is, which God's children and heirs are entitled to; ſurely it is the greateſt and largeſt that ever was: "All things are yours," 1 Cor. iii. 21. More particularly,

1. The *earth* is their inheritance, Mat. v. 5. though commonly they poſſeſs little of it, yet they have a covenant-right to make uſe of the good creatures, and the outward ſupport and refreſhments of life. The men of this world, though they have a general providential right to ſuch things of the earth as they poſſeſs, yet they have no covenant-title thereto, as believers have: Their enjoyments come not to them from God as a loving Father, or as a God in covenant with them, to promote their ſouls good: They have not the comfortable and ſanctified enjoyment of the creature; no, this comes only to us in Chriſt, and is a part of the believer's portion. By the fall, Adam and his poſterity were diſinherited, they loſt their covenant-right over the creatures, with the ſanctified uſe thereof. But in Chriſt, who is the heir of all things, the title is renewed to believers, and they become heirs of the world: and whatever part of it falls to their ſhare, they may look on it as a bleſſing of the covenant, a legacy from Chriſt, a part of his purchaſe, ſanctified for their uſe, and deſigned for their good.

2. Heaven is their heritage, however poor they be in this world, yet they are heirs of the kingdom which God hath promiſed to them that love him, Jam. ii. 5.

The

The heirs of this celeſtial crown are like princes in diſguiſe, travelling in a foreign country: ſtrangers, that know them not, look only to their outward appearance; and are apt to think them poor and miſerable; but their hopes and happineſs lye in things not ſeen; they are heirs of the land that is afar off. Sometimes, with Moſes, they are allowed to come to the top of Piſgah, to view this promiſed land, and this is moſt ſatisfying: At other times, with Abraham, they are admitted, as it were, to walk through it, and hear God ſay, "All this is thine, all is made over to thee in Chriſt;" and this fills the heirs of heaven with joy "unſpeakable, and full of glory."

3. In the text they are called "heirs of God;" God himſelf is their inheritance, as this is more than to ſay, they are heirs of both heaven and earth. "I will be your God," is the moſt comprehenſive promiſe in the whole Bible, it imports an intereſt in all the bleſſings and promiſes of the new-covenant, in all the purchaſe and fulneſs of Chriſt, in all the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit, and in all the divine attributes and perfections. When the Lord ſaith to the heirs of ſalvation, "I will be your God;" how great is the inheritance he bequeaths to them! It is more than if he made over to them a thouſand heavens, or ten thouſand worlds; for, ſaith he, I give you the omnipotent Jehovah, I make over myſelf unto you, in all my eſſential perfections; my *omnipotency* ſhall be your guard, my *omniſciency* your overſeer, my *omnipreſence* your companion, my *bounty* your ſtore, my *wiſdom* your counſellor, my *juſtice* your rewarder, my *holineſs* your fountain of grace, my *unchangeableneſs* the rock of your ſecurity, my *all ſufficiency* your inheritance, and my *eternity* the date of your happineſs. Surely, O believer, the "lines are fallen to you in pleaſant places," and you have got a "goodly heritage."

IV. The *fourth* head was, to enquire how believers attain to this high privilege, of being children and heirs of God. 1. It is not from any worth or merit in them, but from the free love and goodneſs of God, that hath predeſtinated them to the adoption of children, and cho-

ſen them heirs of the kingdom. 2. It is by the mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, who, as their Surety, interpoſes for them, when under ſentence of death; purchaſed the inheritance for them by his merits, and left it to them in legacy by his teſtament, which he ſealed and confirmed with his own blood. 3. By the application of the Holy Ghoſt, who is the executor of Chriſt's teſtament, and who comes and infefts believers in the bequeathed inheritance, by renewing their ſouls, working faith in them, and diſpoſing them to cloſe with the Redeemer; planting all gracious habits in them, and thereby giving them the earneſt and firſt fruits of the inheritance.

V. The *fifth* thing was, to ſhew the wonderful grace of God in granting ſuch a glorious privilege to poor believers. If we ſeriouſly conſider the grace of God in adopting us to be his children and heirs, we may well cry out with the apoſtle, 1 John iii. 1. "Behold! what manner of love is this the Father hath beſtowed on us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God?" The wonderfulneſs of this grace appears in theſe things:

1. That he adopts us to be his ſons and heirs, when he needed us not. Men adopt ſons becauſe they are childleſs, and need ſome to propagate their families, keep up their name, and perpetuate their memories: But the eternal Father adopts children and heirs, tho' he hath a natural and eternal Son of his own, who is the brightneſs of his glory, the expreſs image of his perſon, a Son in whom his ſoul delighteth; and although he could have been infinitely happy without us, and needed no acceſſion to his glory. We ſtood in need of a Father, but he ſtood not in need of ſons.

2. That he chuſes thoſe to be his ſons and heirs, who have nothing to recommend them to him, but are utterly unworthy of this dignity and privilege. Men uſually adopt thoſe who are of their kindred, or who are their friends and favourites; but God ſhews this favour to rebels, enemies, traitors, ſatan's ſlaves, and hell's heirs. Men adopt thoſe in whom they ſee, or at leaſt fancy, ſomething of worth: Mordecai adopted Eſther becauſe ſhe was fair: But God adopts thoſe who are naturally moſt vile and unworthy, yea, deſpicable

as

as worms, loathſome as carcaſſes, deformed as monſters, black as Ethiopians, and diſeaſed as lepers. Having nothing to engage his love, but every thing to provoke his loathing of us.

3. That he ſhould be at ſuch charge and coſt in adopting us. Men are at no pains about it, but to draw up a writ, and ſign or ſeal it, and then all is done; but infinite wiſdom and power muſt be ſet on work to make us ſons and heirs; an eternity muſt be ſpent in contriving the method; the eternal Son of God muſt die to bring it about, and the charter of our adoption muſt be ſealed with his moſt precious blood. Never was it heard, that any man let his only ſon ſuffer and die, to adopt an enemy; but this the great God hath done, which is the wonder of the redeemed, the wonder of angels, and will be the wonder of eternity.

4. That he exalts thoſe whom he adopts to ſuch high dignity and honour; for God to have pardoned his enemies, and delivered them from going to hell, had been much; for him to have taken his enemies, and made them his friends and favourites, had been more: But for God to take his mortal enemies into his boſom, and make them his ſons and heirs; yea, beautify them with his image, value them as his jewels, entitle them to his kingdom, and make them co-heirs with his own beloved Son, is ſuch a prodigy of love, as ſurpaſſeth all finite comprehenſion. To have advanced one of the bleſſed cherubims or ſeraphims ſo high, had been a ſtupendous act of grace: But to take a lump of polluted duſt, a curſed ſinner, a wretch as black as hell could make him, and raiſe him ſo high, yea, above the brighteſt cherub in glory, is eternally an aſtoniſhing wonder of free love.

APPPLICATION.

I. Uſe of *information.* This doctrine informs us of theſe things:

1. Of the wonderful love and goodneſs of God, to poor elect ſinners in Chriſt: he takes enemies into his family,

family, yea, puts them among his children; and not only doth he confer the honour of ſonſhip on them, but alſo puts the nature of ſons in them; for they are ſons by regeneration, as well as by adoption; both theſe are joined together, as is clear from John i. 12, 13. "To them that believe he gave power to become the ſons of God, who were born not of the will of man, but of God."

2. That believers are of more noble and illuſtrious deſcent than any others; they are ſons of the moſt high God. Some talk of their progenitors, and value themſelves on their high extract: So the Jews vaunted that they were Abraham's ſeed, John viii. 33. But ſurely it is an infinitely greater privilege to be among the ſons of God. David thought it no ſmall honour to be ſon-in-law to the king of Iſrael, 1 Sam. xviii. 18. And ſhall any among us reckon it a ſmall thing to be a ſon to the King of heaven.

3. That God is an infinitely rich and bountiful Father, who makes all his children heirs, and that of a great and ſplendid inheritance: Though his family be numerous, yet there is not one of them left unprovided; for he brings "many ſons to glory," Heb. ii. 10.

II. Uſe of *examination*. Let us all try what right or claims we have to this honour and privilege, of being the ſons and heirs of God.

1. Try, O communicants, if ye have the marks and characters of God's children. 1. Have you cordially made choice of God as your Father in Chriſt, and dedicated yourſelves to him at this time, in a perpetual covenant, Jer. iii. 19. "How ſhall I put thee among the children! &c. Thou ſhalt call me my Father." 2. Have ye received the Mediator by a true and lively faith; for it is hereby we become children, John i. 2. "To as many as received him, he gave power to become the ſons of God," Gal. iii. 26. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus. We can be adopted only by virtue of his right, who is the elder brother, and heir of all things. 3. Are you like your Father? have you his image upon you, holineſs? 4. Do you ſincerely love Chriſt, your elder Brother and Redeemer?

deemer? John viii. 42. " Jeſus ſaid unto them, if God were your Father, ye would love me. 5. Do ye love and eſteem all the children of the family, as the excellent of the earth? Pſal. xvi. 2. 6. Are ye heartily concerned for the intereſt and welfare of your mother, the church? Pſal. cxxxvii. 6. 7. Are ye troubled for offending your Father? 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27. 8. Are you deſirous of your Father's preſence and company? Pſal. xxvi. 8. 9. Have ye childrens appetites for your ſpiritual food? Pſal. lxxxiv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

II. Try if you have the Spirit and diſpoſition of heirs. 1. Is it your main care to make ſure your birthright, and title to the inheritance? Many of God's children have not the aſſurance hereof, but they all labour after it, and are reſtleſs without it, Matth. vi 33. 2. If you be heirs, you will highly value your birthright, and not be willing to part with it for a trifle; you will not (like profane Eſau, Heb. xi. 16.) ſell it for ſenſual pleaſures, and gratifications of the fleſh: Nay, your hearts will riſe againſt ſatan's ſolicitations to break with your Father, and ſell your birthright, and ſay with Naboth to Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 3. " The Lord forbid it me, that I ſhould give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." God forbid, that I ſhould part with my portion in Chriſt for worldly gain, carnal ſatisfactions, or any earthly delight whatſomever.

3. Your hearts and thoughts will be much ſet upon your heritage above, for it is your treaſure, and " where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo," Mat. vi. 21. What do ye think moſt of, when ye are alone? Nebuchadnezzar, when he was alone, thought on his large territories, Dan iv. 29, 30. " Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the houſe of the kingdom," &c. So, if you be heirs of heaven, your hearts will be running much thither.

4. In the time of your difficulties and ſtraits, you will be drawing your comfort and encouragement from the large and goodly heritage you are entit'ed to; and likewiſe you will be looking and waiting when it will fall into your hands; yea, you will be ſending meſſengers and ſpies to the land of promiſe to ſurvey it, and bring you

you good tidings from thence, for your ſupport, while in the wilderneſs; You will be feaſting and entertaining yourſelves with the thoughts of your rich inheritance and portion in Chriſt, and groaning within yourſelves, "When ſhall I be with my Father and elder Brother above! When ſhall my pilgrimage be finiſhed, and the time of my minority expire, that I may enter upon the poſſeſſion." Rom. viii. 23. "We, who have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourſelves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies."

Laſtly, All thoſe who are heirs of heaven do get the ſeal and earneſt of the inheritance put in their hearts, viz. the Spirit of God, 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13, 14. "After that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion." As an earneſt-penny ſecures our right to a bargain, and is alſo a part of it; ſo the ſanctifying Spirit, or grace of God in the heart, is a pledge and earneſt of the glorious inheritance above. O communicants! have ye got this earneſt in your ſouls? Are yo beginnning to reap the firſt fruits of the inheritance? Surely it will be matter of rejoicing to find it.

Queſt. How ſhall I know if I have got the Spirit in my heart, as the ſeal and firſt-fruits of the inheritance?

Anſ. By his actings and operations in your ſouls. 1. Wherever he is, he is an illuminating Spirit, that lets you ſee the evil of ſin, and the excellency of Chriſt. 2. A humbling Spirit, that brings the ſoul to ly in the duſt, and abhor itſelf for its abominations. 3. A Spirit of prayer, that inclines the ſoul to come to its father, for the ſupply of wants, Gal. iv. 6. 4. A ſin-ſubduing Spirit, that helps to weaken and mortify indwelling corruption, Rom. viii. 13. 5. A ſoul ſanctifying Spirit, that infuſes, increaſes, quickens, and actuates grace in the heart, Eph. iv. 23, 24. Now, wherever theſe gracious actings and operations of the Spirit are to be found, you may conclude you have got a ſeal of your heirſhip, the earneſt and firſt-fruits of the inheritance,

inheritance, as a pledge of your being ſhortly put in poſſeſſion of all.

III. Uſe of *exhortation*, to two ſorts, 1. Thoſe who are aliens and foreigners. 2. Thoſe who are children, and heirs of God.

I. I ſhall ſpeak to thoſe who are aliens, have no intereſt in God's family, nor the childrens privileges; and yet many ſuch have been preſuming to eat of the childrens bread, to which they have no right. I intreat you to awake from your ſecurity, and conſider the miſery of your ſtate. O! that God would ſound an alarm in your ears.

1. If you be not God's children, you are dogs; and yet you have been preſuming to meddle with the childrens bread, which is horrid ſacrilege.

2. You are children of the devil, and of the family of hell; nay, you are Satan's bond ſlaves. There is no medium; either you are God's children, or the devil's ſlaves, John viii. 44. And what have Satan's ſlaves to do with God's holy things?

3. O alien and foreigner! thou art a child of wrath, an heir of hell; this is thy native heritage and portion, and this ſad heritage will remain ſure to thee; when thou leaveſt thy ſubſtance to others, this ſhall go alongſt with thyſelf to another world. "The wrath of God abideth on thee," both here and eternally: O ſinner! wrath is thy conſtant covering now, and the heavens are growing blacker and blacker every day above thy head. The earth is weary of thee; the pit is opening her mouth for thee; "Hell is groaning for thee from beneath;" and the thread of life, that is keeping thee out of it, is juſt ready to break. O! waken before it be too late.

4. Thou art "without God in the world"; thou haſt no intereſt in God as thy friend; thou art far from God; he is thy wrathful enemy: Thy hell is begun already; for what makes hell, but excluſion from the preſence of God! "Depart from me, ye curſed." Now you are gone from God already, with his curſe upon you, like the damned; only your caſe is not deſperate as theirs is: There is ſome hope of your returning to God

God again; but there is none of theirs. "O! turn then to the ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope."

5. By preſuming on the Lord's table, you have drawn a new curſe on yourſelves; for ye have been mocking God, ſhedding Chriſt's blood, murdering the bleſſed Redeemer: You have been acting Judas's part, ſaying, "Hail Maſter," and "betraying the Son of God with a kiſs." O! Satan's ſlaves, you have been eating Chriſt's bread, but God's curſe was on the morſel you got; and you have drawn down new ſoul-plagues on yourſelves. You'll be ten times more Satan's ſlaves than you were before; for to all your other ſins you have added this, of "crucifying Chriſt afreſh."

Queſt. Is there any hope for ſuch children of wrath, and heirs of hell as we are? "What ſhall we do to be ſaved?"

Anſ. 1. I ſay to you, as Peter to Simon Magus, Acts viii. 21, 22. "Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter; thy heart is not right with God: repent therefore of this thy wickedneſs, and pray God for forgiveneſs." Repent and weep over a ſlain Chriſt, whom you pierced at his table, and cry, "Lord, deliver me from blood-guiltineſs." O can you weep over a dead child, or friend? Can you weep for the loſs of world's wealth, and not weep for the loſs of your ſouls, and of your Saviour?

2. Retire into ſome ſecret place, and there meditate on your miſery, while children of Satan, and heirs of wrath: Firmly believe your ſad ſtate, your ſalvation is impoſſible, while in it. There is a bill of excluſion paſt in the court of heaven, againſt all under a covenant of works, which is your caſe, Gal. iv. 30. "The ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir:" heirs of wrath muſt not be heirs of glory: there is no ſalvation under this covenant, but on a condition impoſſible, perfect obedience to the law, and ſatisfaction to divine juſtice for the wrong already done. There is no promiſe in it of pardon, no place for repentance, no accepting the will for the deed. O poor forlorn ſoul, put the queſtion to thyſelf, how ſhall I live in this caſe? How ſhall I die in it? How ſhall I appear before a juſt God in it?

it? Surely, a ſtate of wrath is too hot a climate for my ſoul to live in.

3. Cheriſh convictions when God ſends them: Go not to run away with God's arrows of conviction ſticking in your conſciences, to your employments, to work them out; to your cups, to drink them out; to your bed, to ſleep them out; to your companions, to ſport them away: No, but run with them to the great Phyſician Chriſt, that he may take them out with his own hand, and apply Gilead's balm to the wound. Alas! many deſtroy their immortal ſouls, by crucifying their convictions.

4. Preſently embrace the ſweet goſpel-offers that are made to you; now is the day when the great trumpet is blown, that out-caſt periſhing ſinners may come and accept of the goſpel-jubilee, Iſa. xxvii. 13. Now liberty is proclaimed to the captives: Now the heirs of wrath may become heirs of glory: And what way is that? even by cloſing with Chriſt in a marriage covenant. Come marry the heir of all things, and you ſhall be freed from bondage, and heaven ſhall be your dowry. Come flee preſently out of the dominion of the law, into the dominion of grace; and there the law's curſes ſhall not reach you. Accept of Jeſus Chriſt on the terms of grace, and you ſhall have a great heritage with him, an inheritance that ſhall laſt for ever. Wordly heritages do not laſt; all your riches and honours, profits and pleaſures, muſt ſhortly be buried with you, they cannot accompany you into another world: But if you accept of Chriſt, as your Saviour and Surety, then the eternal God is your God, "and portion for ever." O heirs of wrath, what are your hearts ſaying? Are you content with this bargain? Are you willing to leave ſatan's ſlavery, and become children and heirs of the great King?

5. Remember that dreadful vengeance will ſhortly ſeize upon them that refuſe ſuch a glorious heritage: conſider what is abiding you, Pſal. xi. 6. "Snares, fire, brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt, ſhall be the portion of your cup."

Exhort. II. To thoſe who are ſons and heirs of God. I ſhall ſpeak, in the *firſt* place, ſome things to you all in general.

1. Has God, of his free mercy and rich grace, made you his ſons and heirs, then be humble, and remember what you once were. When God found you, you were "children of wrath, even as others." Free-love hath picked you out from among the multitude of condemned malefactors, hath commanded your fetters to be taken off, put a pardon in your hands, and brought you forth to the glorious liberty of the children of God, and made you "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt." You had nothing in you to engage him to love you, yet he loved you, when you were moſt loathſome: What matter of wonder is here: The glorious Bridegroom courted and eſpouſed you to himſelf on the day in which you might have been led forth to execution! He took off your priſon-garment, and cloathed you with robes of righteouſneſs, and garments of ſalvation: He took the chains from off your arms, the rope from about your neck, and put his own comelineſs on you, that you might be fit for the king's table! Be not proud of your gifts, graces, or attainments: but remember, that ye were once "children of wrath, even as others;" all you have is borrowed. Be humble alſo, and "remember your faults this day:" Mind, how you have forgotten your benefactor! How unkindly you have treated him that remembered you in your low eſtate! How unſuitably you have walked! "Is this your kindneſs to your friend?"

2. Pity the children of wrath, and heirs of hell, that ſtill ly in chains of darkneſs. Be not unconcerned for them, ſeeing ye were once in the ſame condition with them; ye have got aſhore, but your fellows behind you are ſtill in danger of periſhing. Put on bowels of compaſſion for them, pity them, and uſe all means for their deliverance.

3. Be content with your lot in a preſent world, and be eaſy under your preſent ſtraits and difficulties, whatever they be; for you have the proſpect of a great inheritance, from whence you may take encouragements under

under every trial. You may be eaſy under the world's hatred, and carry chearfully amidſt all affronts and injuries, for you may expect to be envied. Favourites of princes are commonly ſlandered and abuſed. Joſeph was hated of his brethren, becauſe his father ſhewed more than ordinary kindneſs to him. "If ye were of the world, (ſaith Chriſt) the world would love his own: But becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you," John xvi. 19. But let this ſolace your minds; you are heirs of God, and dearly beloved of him.

4. Live as children of God, and heirs of the kingdom; walk worthy of your dignity, and behave ſuitably to your character. You have the angels, thoſe great officers of the crown, and chief miniſters of ſtate, appointed to wait on you conſtantly, while here below, and you have a glorious expectation hereafter. Shew forth then the greatneſs and nobleneſs of your ſpirits, by undervaluing mean and ſordid things. Let your ſpeech and actions here look like the country to which you are going, that it may be ſaid of you, as of Gideon's children, Judg. viii. 18. "Each one reſembled the children of a king." The heirs of earthly kings have been obſerved to have had generous and noble ſpirits, and have ſcorned to intermeddle with baſe and inferior matters. It is a common ſtory of Alexander the Great, that when he was a little boy, and provoked to run a race with one of his inferiors, he firſt demurred, and then flatly refuſed the challenge, ſaying, "It did not become the ſon of a king to ſubmit to ſo mean an undertaking, and contend with one ſo far below him." The brave ſpirit of that princely youth may ſhame thoſe Chriſtians who are the adopted ſons of God, and heirs to a crown that ſhall never fade; and yet oftentimes are found groveling on the earth, like the men of this world, and buſied about things very far below them. Let the heirs of heaven maintain a holy contempt of the world, and the things thereof. Let them ſet their feet on thoſe things on which worldlings ſet their hearts; and reckon themſelves richer and happier in

their relation to God and the kingdom above, than any graceleſs monarch that ever wore an earthly crown. Shall earthly men make ſuch a noiſe in the world, and think none comparable to them, becauſe forſooth their heap of dung is ſome bigger than their neighbours? (for ſo Paul eſteems the world) and will the children of the king of heaven, "of whom the world is not worthy," Heb. xi. 38. be ſo low and mean-ſpirited, as to be amuſed and dazzled with the world's vanities: who yet have God for their portion, Chriſt for their huſband, heaven for their home, and glory for their treaſure?

5. Let the heirs of heaven be mutually concerned in one another; let them ſympathize together, when any of them is in trouble, and alſo rejoice in one another's welfare. And when the time cometh that they arrive at full age, and are taken up to the poſſeſſion of their inheritance, (though they be your near relations) do not quarrel God's providence, or mourn "as thoſe that have no hope;" or carry, as if you grudged their happineſs; but chearfully ſubmit to your Father's will, and rejoice in their preferment; for the "day of their death is better than the day of their birth."

6. Be earneſt in prayer, that God may raiſe up many young heirs to ſupply the room of thoſe that he is taking home. Let the heirs of God be never ſo much increaſed, God's children will not envy their number, but greatly rejoice therein; ſeeing the inheritance is vaſt, and infinitely ſatisfying to both men and angels: and our heavenly Father is highly glorified in the multitude of his children. And, *laſtly*, When heirs are brought into the family, carry affectionately to them; be kind to young heirs, eſpecially during the time of their nonage and want of experience; be for "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame," and great ſhall be your reward in heaven.

In the *next* place, I ſhall ſay ſomething more particularly to thoſe who were at their father's table yeſterday, of whom I preſume there have been, and are, ſeveral ſorts.

I. There

I. There may be ſome (I hope) that have ground to ſay, That they came to their Father's table, and he ſmiled on them, and dealt bountifully with them. To ſuch I ſhall ſay theſe few things: 1. Wonder at the Lord's kindneſs, and bleſs his name with your whole ſouls, for his diſtinguiſhing favours to you, who were by nature enemies of God, and children of ſatan. 2. Hold faſt and improve carefuly what you have got, and let not ſatan rob you of it. 3. Sympathize with other children of the family, that have not won your length, but perhaps are under great diſcouragements; mind their caſe, and ſpeak a good word for them now, while you are favourites of heaven.

II. In the *next* place, I ſhall ſpeak to thoſe heirs of heaven, who, notwithſtanding of their being at the table, remain full of doubts and fears, and are very apprehenſive that God has not yet put them among the children, nor given them a right to the heir's portion. Well, what is the ground of your doubting? 1. Oh, ſaith one, I ſcarce feel the working of the ſanctifying Spirit of God in my ſoul, which is the common earneſt or pledge of the inheritance, that God uſeth to give to his heirs while here. *Ans.* Though grace be weak in you, you muſt "not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things," or ſay you have none at all: Nay, bleſs God, if thou canſt ſpy any ſpark of grace in thy heart at all, and pray that God may cheriſh it. A man that gets an earneſt of a good bargain, is not much diſcouraged whether it be a greater or ſmaller piece of money, a ſixpence, or half a crown, for he thinks the leaſt piece is a ſufficient earneſt or pledge from an honeſt man of his bargain; and he is eaſy, ſeeing he knows he has to do with one that is faithful, and will not go back of his word: Indeed he might be diſcouraged, if that which he got were not an earneſt penny: But there is a great difference betwixt a piece of money that is given in gratitude, and that which is given only in earneſt, as a pledge of a far greater ſum, or of a very rich bargain. O heir of heaven, remember this, the ſmall degree of grace thou haſt, is given only as an earneſt of more grace, yea, of eternal glory itſelf.

2. Another

In the latter end of this chapter, the prophet is reproving the people of God, who are now ſuppoſed to be captives at Babylon, for their unbelief and deſpondency under their affliction, in ſaying or thinking God had either caſt them off, or could not help them, verſe 27. For remedying whereof, he puts them in mind of God's power and all-ſufficiency to help in the greateſt ſtraits, verſe 28. And in the text and following verſes, he aſſures them of God's compaſſion, and readineſs to help them under all their ſinking diſcouragements, "He giveth power to the faint," &c.

More particularly in the text, we may notice theſe things: 1. The ſad caſe of many of God's people in captivity, "They were faint and without might," i. e. They were under preſſures and burdens both outward and inward, that were ready to cruſh them, and make them faint away; they were called to ſeveral pieces both of ſervice and ſuffering, for which they had no ſtrength nor might of themſelves. 2. We have their mercy and privilege under this ſad caſe; *power* and *ſtrength*; i. e. ſpiritual ſtrength mainly, which is graciouſly promiſed them for their encouragement, under all their faintings and trials. 3. The author of this privilege, "The everlaſting God, the Lord Jehovah, with whom is everlaſting ſtrength, who fainteth not, neither is weary." 4. The way how this mercy is conveyed; it is in a way of free gift, without any worth or merit on our part; he giveth it, and he encreaſeth it; he giveth ſtrength where it is not, and he encreaſeth it where it is already given in any meaſure.

Doctrine. "That as the Lord's people while here are liable to many fainting diſcouragements, under which they cannot ſupport themſelves, ſo the Lord is pleaſed to give them ſuitable ſtrength for all their exigencies." This is alſo confirmed from that gracious promiſe, recorded in the following chapter, Iſa. xli. 10. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not diſmayed, for I am thy God; I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs." And the pſalmiſt confirms this truth by his own comfortable experience, Pſal. cxxxviii.

cxxxviii. 3. "In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength to my ſoul."

The method I chuſe for proſecuting this doctrine, ſhall be,

1. To enquire into thoſe fainting diſcouragements, which believers labour under while here.

2. Why the Lord doth let them meet with ſuch trials.

3. How it is that the Lord doth ſtrengthen his weak and fainting people.

4. What are the great ends and uſes for which the Lord gives ſuch ſtrength to his people.

5. Give ſome reaſons to prove, that the Lord will certainly give them this ſtrength.

6. Make improvement.

I. As to the firſt; viz. To inſtance ſome of theſe fainting diſcouragements that believers labour under while here, and which, in a ſpecial manner, do call for divine ſupport. And theſe are of two ſorts; viz. Either of a temporal or ſpiritual nature.

1. Sometimes they meet with external afflicting providences, which are very diſcouraging: As, (1.) When they are tryſted with *poverty* and *want*, ſo that they know not how to ſubſiſt themſelves and their families; this is a great trial, and requires ſpiritual ſtrength from God to help them to carry right under it. (2.) When they are deſtitute of *earthly friends*, and have none to comfort or ſympathiſe with them in trouble; this is alſo a heavy trial that needs ſtrength from God. (3.) When they are loaded with *reproaches* and *miſrepreſentations*, and that not only from enemies, but even from friends; this hath been very ſinking to the beſt of God's people. (4.) When they are tryſted with the death and loſs of near and dear relations, pleaſant children, and helpful friends; this caſe has been afflicting to many. (5.) When they are under bodily ſickneſs or racking pains, ſo that they "have no reſt in their bones, wearieſome nights are appointed for them, and they are full of toſſings till the dawning of the day." (6.) When they have a near view of meeting with death, that king of terrors, and terror of kings. (7.)

When they are under the oppreſſions and perſecution of cruel enemies. Theſe are trials that the deareſt of God's children are expoſed to, and under which they would be ready to faint, if they were not ſtrengthened from above. And eſpecially thoſe outward preſſures are very ſinking, and diſcouraging to them; eſpecially when they think it is their ſin that has brought them into theſe ſad circumſtances, or when their trials are of a long continuance, and it may be ſomething in them appears to be ſingular, as it was in the caſe of the Jews in Babylon. Then it is that God's people are ready to faint and ſuccumb; and ſhould look to God to ſtep in with ſuitable ſupplies of ſtrength.

2. Sometimes God's people are tryſted with fainting diſcouragements of a ſpiritual nature: As, (1.) When they find indwelling corruption, and heart-plagues ſtrong and prevailing: This caſe was very affecting and afflicting to David, Pſal. lxv. 3. and to Paul, Rom. vii. 24. and to the church, when they cried out Iſa. lxiv. 6. "Our iniquities like the wind have taken us away:" *q. d.* The tide is ſo ſtrong, we have no might to ſtem it. (2.) When the *enemy is exalted over them*, and ſatan doth harraſs them with blaſphemous injections, horrid atheiſtical thoughts, and violent temptations; he ſometimes tempts God's children to the greateſt of ſins, as he tempted Job to curſe God: How is the ſoul ready to faint at ſuch a time, if it get not ſtrength from God! and crieth out, "How long ſhall mine enemy be exalted over me? It is like a ſword in my bones, when the enemy reproacheth me, and ſaith daily to me, where is thy God? O my rock, why haſt thou forgotten me? why go I mourning becauſe of the oppreſſion of the enemy?"

3. When God hides his face, and they cannot get acceſs to him in duty; ſo as they think, they are given up and left to ſtruggle with ſatan and corruption in their own ſtrength. That is a melancholy caſe to the ſoul, under which it would faint, without ſecret ſupport from God.

4. When they find their hearts wholly out of frame for any ſpiritual duty; by reaſon of much backwardneſs

neſs to it, wearying of it, and corruption working in them, which carries them away from God in time of duty: Such as atheiſm, unbelief, worldly-mindedneſs, heart-hardneſs, &c. Now the ſoul would faint, and wholly backſlide from God, if he did not ſecretly uphold it.

5. When the ſoul is brought back again, as it were, to the foot of mount Sinai, and made to hear the thunderings thereof, and the curſes of a broken law renewed: The law gets a new commiſſion to take the man into cuſtody, and put his feet into the ſtocks: So that the old wounds are opened, and former guilt is revived, and God ſeems to behave to him like a ſtranger or an enemy. Thus he did to Haman, Pſal. lxxviii. Now, at ſuch a time the ſoul is ready to faint, and ſay, "Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Will he be favourable no more? Hath he forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies? But eſpecially if ſickneſs, or the meſſenger of death, come and knock at the man's door, while in ſuch a caſe, O! how is he diſtreſſed with the melancholy apprehenſions of death and judgment? "Death (thinks he,) is near, and I am moſt unready for it; judgment is approaching, my accounts are unclear, and the Judge's face all covered with frowns." Now the ſoul indeed would faint if God in Chriſt did not ſupport it.

6. As believers have many fainting diſcouragements, upon the account of their own caſe, ſo alſo upon a public account, in reſpect of the church and land wherein they live: as, 1. When they ſee a ſpirit of ſlumber and deep ſleep fallen upon profeſſors, ſo that they are not moved with the judgments of God, when denounced both by his word and providence; yea, though "the fire be kindled, and burning round about them, yet they lay it not to heart." 2. When they ſee religion under a great and viſible decay among all ranks, many turning daily more careleſs and indifferent about duty, more ſlack about family worſhip and ſecret prayer, and daily more carnal and worldly in their converſation. When they ſee chriſtian love decay, diviſions and animoſities increaſe, malice, envy, and hatred of

one another prevail, and people growing more ſelfiſh, minding their own things, and careleſs about the things of Jeſus Chriſt. 3. When they ſee God's Spirit in a ſad meaſure withdrawn from the aſſemblies of his people; ordinances become as a ſealed book, dry breaſts, and a miſcarrying womb, ſo that Ichabod may be written on them, or *God is departed*; when they ſee communions lifeleſs, and not what they wont to be. Chriſt is abſent, and yet few ſenſible of the judgment, or laying it to heart, ſo as to lament after the Lord. They ſee many buſy to ſin him away, but few endeavouring to pray him back again. The ſincere ſeekers of God are often like to faint under this diſcouragement. 4. When they ſee many profeſſors making foul ſlips, yea, falling into ſcandalous ſins, to the reproach of religion, and hardening of the wicked; and but few like to be found ſincere in their profeſſion. 5. When they ſee theſe that are truly godly, tender and conſcientious in their walk, public-ſpirited and concerned for the intereſt of Chriſt, removing and going off the ſtage: This is a very melancholy and ſinking diſcouragement to the few that are left behind, under which they need ſupport from God: hence it was that the Pſalmiſt cries ſo earneſtly, Pſal. xii. 1. "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaſeth: for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

II. The ſecond thing propoſed was, to enquire why the Lord lets his people be tryſted with ſuch fainting diſcouragements.

1. To correct them for their former faults and miſcarriages; hence we read, Jer. iv. 18. when the Lord had threatened ſeveral ſad things againſt his people, he ſaith, "thy ways and thy doings have procured theſe things to thee." God will have his people to ſmart for ſin; not to make any ſatisfaction for ſin, but to render ſin bitter unto them.

2. To humble and make them low, in midſt of their great attainments and ſignal enjoyments; Believers are ſtill apt to be puffed up with theſe, if they were not kept under by humbling diſpenſations. Hence, even Paul himſelf had a meſſenger of ſatan ſent to buffet him,

him, "leſt he ſhould be exalted above meaſure, thro' the abundance of revelations," 2 Cor. xii. 8.

3. To let them know the difference betwixt earth and heaven, a militant and triumphant ſtate. When things go well with us in the world, we are apt to ſay, with Peter on the mount, "It is good for us to be here." But when theſe go ill, God's people turn their tongue, and ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 27. "It is good for me to draw nigh to God." When we live at eaſe, we are ready to think ourſelves at home: but when trouble comes, we begin to ſay, "Ariſe, let us depart, this is not our reſt." It is not eaſy to wean us from the comforts of this life: and therefore God many times doth rub gall and wormwood on the breaſts of this preſent world, to imbitter its comforts, and take our hearts off it.

4. To awaken the ſpirit of prayer, and make them more importunate in their addreſſes to the throne of grace, Pſal. cxxx. 1. Chriſt ſuffered the ſtorm to continue, till the ſhip was almoſt overwhelmed, that the diſciples might come and awaken him with their cries to help them, Matth. viii. 25.

5. That his people may get new proofs of his love and tender care in ſtrengthening ſuch weak reeds as they are, to endure ſuch ſtorms; and in his ſtepping in ſo ſeaſonably for their relief and ſupport, when ready to faint and ſuccumb. God's people have much to ſpeak on this account, to the praiſe of his free grace, Pſal. xciv. 18. "When I ſaid, my foot ſlippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up."

6. To cauſe his people long for heaven, and mend their pace, in the way to it, Phil. i. 23. There is a great difference betwixt our prayers in health and in ſickneſs; our repentings in proſperity and adverſity, Iſa. xxvi. 16. Hoſ. v. 15. He that in proſperity prayed with a cold heart and dry eyes, can in affliction cry aloud, and mingle his prayers with tears. Though heaven was much out of ſight and out of mind before, and he had ſcarce a thought of flitting; yet now when diſtreſs comes, he begins to ſigh with David, Pſal. lv. 6. "O that I had wings like a dove; for then would I flee

I flee away, and be at reſt: I would haſten my eſcape from the windy tempeſt."

III. The next thing is to enquire, how it is that the Lord doth ſtrengthen his weak and fainting people. And here I ſhall do two things: (1.) Enquire into the nature of this ſpiritual ſtrength the Lord doth give his people. (2.) Into the way and manner how he conveys it to them.

As to the *firſt*, This ſpiritual ſtrength, ſuppoſeth, that the ſoul is made alive, and raiſed out of the grave of ſin and a natural ſtate, by the quickening ſpirit of God. And that the ſoul is united to Chriſt by faith, who is the fountain and channel of all grace and ſpiritual ſtrength.

But more directly, God's ſtrengthening his people, imports theſe things:

1. The Lord's creating and implanting the habits of grace in the ſoul, which are the ſtrength of the ſoul: and therefore called the armour of God, and our ſhield and helmet, Eph. vi.

2. His increaſing of grace in the ſoul; for he not only plants theſe habits, but ſtrengthens them, and gradually perfects what he has begun, Pſal. xcii. 12, 13.

3. His breathing on his own work of grace in the ſoul, and thereby actuating his people's graces, and drawing them forth into a lively exerciſe: For God muſt not only plant grace and increaſe it, but alſo ſet it a work, and bring it into action," Phil. ii. 13. "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do."

4. The Lord's ſtrengthening of his fainting people, imports his letting out, and conveying of freſh ſupplies of grace to his people, in the time of their need. Not only doth he plant, increaſe, and actuate grace, but likewiſe he doth come in with ſeaſonable ſupplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, anſwerable to their preſſures and exigencies. Grace of itſelf is but a creature, and ſubject to periſh, and would ſoon be deſtroyed by the frequent attacks made upon it, if it were not ſeaſonably reinforced with new ſupplies from its author. And thus the Lord, from time to time, feeds the believer's lamp with freſh

oil;

oil; gives it more faith, more love, more hope, and more deſires; and thus he gives power to the faint, and ſtrengthens theſe things which remain when ready to die.

5. It imports the ſupplying the ſoul with experiences of the power, mercy, and faithfulneſs of God, for the nouriſhing and ſtrengthening of faith in the time of trial; and therefore we find the Lord, when he is ſtrengthening his fainting people, in the text and context, he refers them to their former experience, verſe 27, 28. "Haſt thou not heard? Haſt thou not known?" How then ſayſt thou, that God hath forſaken thee? Often do we find David ſtrengthening his faith this way, Pſal. xlii. & cxvi.

6. It lies, in the Lord's applying to the ſoul his gracious and comfortable promiſes, and thereby animating his people with ſpiritual courage and reſolution to grapple with all their enemies and difficulties. He ſhows that God is on their ſide, that his "grace is ſufficient for them," and that he will never leave them, nor forſake them," Iſa. xli. 10. Pſal. cxviii. 6. Heb. xiii. 5, 6. 2 Cor. xii. 9.

7. The Lord ſtrengthens his people, by giving them an encouraging view and proſpect of a happy outgate from all their trials and diſcouragements, and of a glorious victory over all their enemies, Job. xix. 25. Rom. xvi. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

II. I come to the *ſecond* thing; viz. To ſhew the way and manner how this ſpiritual ſtrength is conveyed to believers. And this you may take up in theſe following propoſitions:

1. God has treaſured up in Jeſus Chriſt his Son, a fulneſs of grace and ſpiritual ſtrength for his people. As our Mediator is the purchaſer of this ſtrength, ſo he is the truſtee, to whom it is given in order to be beſtowed upon believers: This is clear, (1.) From the promiſes of God for giving ſtrength, they run in this channel, Zech. x. 12. "I will ſtrengthen them in the Lord; (i. e. in Chriſt) and they ſhall walk up and down in his name, ſaith the Lord. (2.) From the precepts of God, which are in the ſame ſtrain, Eph. vi. 10. "Be ſtrong in

in the Lord, and in the power of his might." 2 Tim. ii. 1. "My ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt." (3.) From the practice of the ſaints, they all look for their ſtrength this way, Iſa. xlv. 24. "Surely, ſhall one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength." And Paul ſaith, Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me." So that Chriſt is our head of influence and ſtore-keeper. The ſtock of our grace and ſtrength, ſince Adam's fall and miſmanagement, is all put in Chriſt's hand; he is the great ſteward of heaven, the key of the ſtore-houſe is in his cuſtody, and on him we muſt daily depend for neceſſary ſupplies.

2. The way that Chriſt our head and treaſurer communicates his ſtrength, and gives out the neceſſary ſupplies thereof to his people, is by the miniſtration of the holy Spirit, and his gracious operations and influences on their ſouls, John xv. 29. John xvi. 14, 15. And for this effect, the Spirit of God dwells in believers, to excite and draw forth their graces to frequent acts and a lively exerciſe; and to give them thoſe gracious aids and aſſiſtances, their exigences do call for.

3. The way that the holy Spirit gives this ſtrength to believers is, in the uſe of appointed means, both public and private, Pſal. lxxxiv. 4, 5, 6, 7. Where we ſee, that thoſe who would go from ſtrength to ſtrength, muſt dwell in God's houſe, and attend his ordinances. We expect not our daily food without labouring, tilling, ſowing and reaping; ſo neither can we look for ſpiritual ſtrength but in the uſe of the word, ſacraments and prayer.

IV. The fourth thing in the general method, is, To ſhow what are the great ends and uſes, for which the Lord gives this ſpiritual ſtrength to his people.

1. He gives it to them for doing or performing of duty; for without new ſupplies of ſtrength, we cannot act ſpiritually, nor perſevere in duty: Hence the ſpouſe cries out, Cant. i. 4. "Draw me, and we will run after thee." And the Pſalmiſt ſaith, Pſal. cxix. 32. "I will run the ways of thy commandments, when thou

ſhalt enlarge my heart." God's work muſt ever be done in God's ſtrength.

2. He gives it for ſuffering, and bearing of croſſes and afflictions, and we need God's ſtrength that we may do it without murmuring or fainting, Col. i. 11.

3. For fighting, we have ſtrong and dangerous enemies to conflict with, the devil, the world, and indwelling ſin; and we have no ſtrength of our own to reſiſt or ſubdue them: wherefore, we muſt look to God for ſupernatural ſtrength.

V. The next thing was to give reaſons, why the Lord will certainly give ſuitable ſtrength to his people under all their exigencies.

1. Becauſe it was purchaſed for them by their Surety Chriſt, and promiſed to them in him, Zech. x. 12.

2. Becauſe they were, in the moſt ſolemn and ſerious manner, recommended to the care of God by his beloved Son Jeſus Chriſt, when he was leaving the world, John xvii. 11.

3. Becauſe of their near relation to him, and his great love to them; they are the ſubjects of his kingdom, the children of his family; yea, they are, as it were, the wife of his boſom; and will he not then take ſpecial care of them?

4. Becauſe they rely and depend wholly upon the Lord himſelf for this ſtrength and ſupport, Iſa. xxvi. 3. Pſal. lvii. 2.

5. Becauſe the Lord knows that his people have many ſtrong and dangerous enemies; and that they have no inherent ſtrength to hold out againſt them, having loſt all that by the fall. Yea, he knows that they have a natural bentneſs to backſliding, that the ſeed of the worſt ſin is in them, and of themſelves they cannot ſtand before the leaſt ſpark of a temptation; and ſo would be infallibly undone, if he did not ſtrengthen them, Hoſ. ii. 7. Pſalm xix. 13.

APPLICATION.

Uſe I. Of *Information*. We may hence ſee,

1. That worldly proſperity and carnal joy are no ſign

of God's favour: For God's people are ſubject to many fainting diſcouragements here. Wicked men receive their good things in this life, but believers good things are to come.

2. We may hence be informed of the difference betwixt the two covenants *of works and of grace.* Adam, by the *firſt*, was to do all by his own inherent ſtrength; but believers, under the *ſecond*, do all by borrowed ſtrength, and muſt conſtantly be beholden to God for new ſupplies. And it is well for us that it is ſo, for our ſtock is far ſurer in God's hand, than in our own. When the prodigal got his ſtock in his own hand, he preſently left his father's houſe, *went into a far country*, and ſquandered all away, and ſo would we, if God ſhould truſt us with it. Beſides, by this gracious method, believers are kept humble all their days, and put to keep up a conſtant correſpondence with a throne of grace, and give all the glory of their through bearing to God's free grace. Bleſſed be God for the well-ordered covenant.

3. We may hence ſee, how great ſecurity believers have for their through-bearing; almighty power is engaged for them; they are ſtrengthened and "kept by the power of God, through faith, unto ſalvation." So that everlaſting ſtrength muſt fail before a believer can finally miſcarry.

Uſe II. Of *Reproof.*

1. To thoſe who are too ſecure and confident when they attain to any ſpiritual comfort or joy, and do not remember the fainting diſcouragements God's people are ſubject to while in this world. O communicants, have you been kindly entertained at this feaſt! Be not vain or ſecure, all things here are changeable: How ſuddenly was David's caſe altered? Pſal. xxx. One time he is mounted up in proſperity; but being too confident, he is preſently caſt down and troubled. And in Pſal. cxix. we find him at one time "rejoicing in God's teſtimonies, as much as in all riches;" and very ſoon after, his "ſoul is cleaving to the duſt, and melting for heavineſs." Go not then to build too much on ſenſible conſolations, for theſe come and go at God's pleaſure;

pleaſure; it is in heaven only you can have continual day without night or cloudings; but here you are to look for changes, yea, for fainting diſcouragements, therefore prepare for them by ſecuring a title to divine ſtrength.

2. To theſe believers who give too much way to fainting diſcouragements, and do not encourage themſelves in their covenanted God, and his ſtrength. I do not marvel, O communicants, though ye be caſt down, who are ſenſible of the hidings of God's face, the prevailing of heart-plagues, the buffetings of ſatan, &c. but only give not way to exceſſive diſcouragement: I call it exceſſive, when it is ready to make you give over hopes, lay aſide endeavours, indiſpoſe you for holy duties, refuſe to apply to Chriſt your all-ſufficient help, or refuſe comfort from God's promiſes of ſtrength and ſupport. Some indeed think religion lies in deſperate unbelieving thoughts, and in making of complaints: but ſurely there is no religion there, otherwiſe we muſt conclude Cain, Judas, and the damned, to be godly. Religion rather lies in the actings of faith, and improving God's promiſes for ſtrengthening us in doing his will.

3. To Arminians, who maintain the doctrine of free-will; viz. That it is in the power of a man's free-will, to do that which is ſpiritually and ſavingly good, if he pleaſe to uſe his natural abilities. Oh! how little do theſe men know themſelves that talk ſo: for if it be not in the power of a man's will, when graciouſly changed and renewed, to do good, without ſuperadded ſupplies of grace and ſtrength from God, from time to time, as certainly it is not; far leſs can a natural and unregenerate perſon do it, that is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.

4. To thoſe communicants who look not entirely to God in Chriſt for ſtrength for the work and warfare, duties and difficulties before them; but lean too much to ſomething in themſelves, or ſomething they have got at this occaſion.

1. Some truſt too much to the ſtability of their own reſolutions and engagements: They have vowed and

ſworn, and they hope likewiſe to perform accordingly. But do not depend upon theſe, otherwiſe they will ſoon fail you; as they did Peter after the firſt communion. The Pſalmiſt was under many reſolutions to keep cloſe to the way of duty, yet he ſays, Pſal. lxxiii. 2. "My feet were almoſt gone, and my ſteps had well nigh ſlipt." And he acknowledges, it was nothing but God's mercy that held him up," Pſal. xciv. 18.

2. Others truſt too much to the ſtability of their gracious habits, without looking to God for daily renewed influences of ſtrength, for actuating and recruiting their weak graces. But, what is grace, faith, love, fear of God, repentance, hope? Of themſelves, they are but vaniſhing things, and if they were not ſeaſonably ſtrengthened and ſupplied from heaven, they would ſoon die, Rev. iii. 2.

5. We may here reprove thoſe who make it an excuſe for the neglect of duty, *They want ſtrength.* Oh! it is, becauſe they want will. For can you ſay, That though you have no ſtrength of yourſelves; yet you deſire to caſt your impotent ſouls in God's way, and aim at duty as ye can, looking to God for ſtrength, and pleading his promiſe? Could you ſay this, it were ſomething. Were you like a man rowing up the water, and ſtill beat back by the impetuous ſtream, you might have ſome ſhadow of excuſe; but when you do not make ſincere attemps, you can have none.

Queſt. How ſhall we undertake to perform duty, when we are dead, and find influences and ſtrength withdrawn?

Anſ. Whatever be our caſe or frame, yet ſtill God's command is of binding force on us, and obliges us to do it.

2. No pretence of indiſpoſition can warrant our not obeying a divine command: for our deadneſs and indiſpoſition is our ſin, and one ſin can never excuſe another, *Two blacks cannot make one white.* So that in a dead hour, you muſt eſſay to do your duty, though you can do nothing but the very outward form.

3. You

3. You muſt aim at your duty to prevent greater evils, for if you neglect it wholly, your caſe grows ſtill worſe: Your deadneſs increaſes, your hardneſs, impenitency, darkneſs, weakneſs and indiſpoſition, will ſtill grow greater.

4. By aiming at duty, you put yourſelves in God's road; And when, like the blind man, you ly in Chriſt's way, you ſtand fairer for a viſit or an alms from him, than thoſe who ſtay at a diſtance.

5. Duties performed, when we are indiſpoſed, may be very pleaſing to God. It muſt ſurely be acceptable to our gracious Lord and Maſter, to ſee one of his weak or lamed ſervants attempt to go his errands, tho' he halt and make but ſlow progreſs in his way: Nay, this will move his tender heart to pity him, and give him ſtrength. And many a time have his ſervants got ſupplies of ſtrength on a ſudden, when they have been eſſaying duty. Their ſouls, "ere they were aware, have made them like the chariots of Aminadab," Cant. vi. 12. Therefore, *O diſcouraged communicant*, perſiſt in aiming at thy duty, whatever be thy preſent frame. Who knows, when thou art lifting at thy heavy burden, but God will graciouſly lend thee a lift and lift it for thee.

Uſe III. Of *Trial.* O communicants, examine, if you have got any ſpiritual ſtrength at this ſolemn feaſt. Many a weak believer has found it a ſtrengthening meal to their fainting ſouls. Mark, if it be ſo with you. 1. Do ye find your graces more quick and vigorous than formerly. As, for inſtance, 1. Is faith more lively? Are you better pleaſed with the contrivance of grace, and method of ſalvation, than before? And are you now enabled to abandon your own righteouſneſs, and go to your Surety Chriſt; laying the burden of your ſins upon him, and leaning wholly to him for pardon and acceptance with God: And alſo looking to him as your head of influences for heart-purity and ſanctifying grace, and ſtrength to perform duty? 2. Is your repentance and grief for ſin increaſed? Do you ſee more of ſin's deformity, and abhor it as the enemy of Chriſt? And are you more afraid of piercing

piercing your Redeemer by it, and more reſolved againſt wicked company and temptations to ſin, than before! 3. Is your love and deſire toward Chriſt more quickened? Are you more reſtleſs without his preſence? Would you part with your beſt enjoyments, in a world, for a ſight of his face? Are you more deſirous of heart-holineſs, that you may be capable to ſerve Chriſt, and advance the intereſt of his kingdom?

2. If this ordinance hath been a ſtrengthening meal to you, then you will find more delight in duty than before, you will be inclined and enabled to pray more fervently, to hear more attentively, to praiſe more affectionately, to receive more believingly, keep the ſabbath more exactly, watch over your heart and ways more diligently: and, in a word, to be more humble and pious towards God, more juſt and righteous towards man, and more ſober and temperate towards yourſelves; yea, you will be more afraid to ſhift or neglect any known duty, than you were before.

3. You will be more animated and encouraged to "fight the good fight of faith," to reſiſt the devil's temptations, and the world's allurements, to ſtruggle againſt your luſts, and mortify indwelling ſin. And you will be ſetting conſcience on the watch-tower, to give warning of the enemies approach; and you will not be ſlow to take the alarm.

4. If you have got more ſtrength, you will be better reconciled to the croſs than formerly; and content with patience and ſubmiſſion to underly what troubles and afflictions the Lord thinks fit to tryſt you with for your ſoul's good; yea, and kiſs the rod when it comes, ſaying, "Good is the will of the Lord concerning me."

Uſe IV. Of *Exortation*. Let me hence exhort you to ſeveral duties.

1. Let thoſe believers, who are not tryſted with ſuch fainting diſcouragements as others, bleſs God for his tenderneſs towards them, and bear their ſmaller trials the more patiently. How gentle is your exerciſe, and ſoul-trouble, in reſpect of Job's, David's, Heman's, and many others, dear and near to God, who have been ready to faint under their burdens, and preſſed above meaſure;

God is gracious to you, he ſees you are weak, and will not overburden you.

2. Let none miſconſtruct believers exerciſes of ſpirit, nor deſpiſe them, becauſe they are frequently faint and diſcouraged: For the greateſt ſpirits in the world have been thus exerciſed. David was a man of ſingular valour, that had a heart as "the heart of a lion," 2 Sam. xvii. 10. A man of eminent wiſdom, and therefore ſaid to be "wiſe as an angel of God," 2 Sam. xiv. 20. A man of a chearful temper, and a great maſter of muſic, and therefore called the "ſweet ſinger of Iſrael," 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. And yet we frequently find him ſore troubled, bowed down, cleaving to the duſt, and ſharply exerciſed under the hidings of God's face, and other ſoul diſtreſſes.

3. Doth God give ſuitable ſtrength to his people in all exigences? Let none abuſe this doctrine, by giving up with the uſe of the means that God has appointed; and neglecting to uſe their own endeavours. For though believers have Chriſt to lean to all their way in their journey to heaven; yet none muſt expect to be carried thither upon his ſhoulders, without ſetting down a foot. We may warrantably look to him for ſtrength for every duty; yet it is in our uſing the means that this ſtrength is conveyed.

4. Beware of leaning to yourſelves, and neglecting to look for this promiſed ſtrength. (1.) Lean not to your own purpoſes; for your "goodneſs is like the morning dew." (2.) Lean not to your gracious habits; for theſe are but creatures, and ready to die. (3.) Lean not to your duties and performances; for they are defiled and unclean. (4.) Lean not to your frames; for they are fleeting and unconſtant. And beſides, it is highly dangerous and provoking to God, for to truſt in any of theſe; remember the fearful curſe that is pronounced againſt him "that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord, Jer. xxvii. 5, 6. Whom then ſhall we truſt? Read Iſa. xxvi. 4. "Truſt ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength.

5. Let all believing communicants bleſs God for this new

new and excellent method of ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt. The new covenant is far better than the old. Now, our ſtock is not in our own hand, but in Chriſt's, and he managss it for us; which is our great happineſs. As when God brought Iſrael out of Egypt with a high hand, he did not ſet them down on the other ſide of the Red ſea, and then bid them ſhift their way to Canaan: no, he led them on their way; yea, "As a man carries his children, ſo he bare them all the way they went." So when God, in a day of his power, brings an elect ſoul out of ſpiritual Egypt, he doth not ſet him in the way with a ſtock of ſtrength in his hand, and then leave him to march through the wilderneſs alone: no, he leads and ſupports him all the way; for he knows that the whole country riſes on him in his march, and if left to go alone, without ſpecial and renewed aid, he would never get to Canaan.

Queſt. But what courſe ſhall I take to get theſe ſeaſonable ſupplies of ſtrength from God, that I may be helped ſafe through the wilderneſs, without fainting and upſitting?

Anſ. Take theſe directions:

1. Labour to be thoroughly convinced of your own impotence and inſufficiency, that you may be weak in your own ſenſe and feeling; for the way to be ſtrong, is to be weak, according to the apoſtle's experience, 2 Cor. xii. 10. "When I am weak, then am I ſtrong." Hence alſo it is ſaid of theſe worthies, Heb. xi. 34. "Out of weakneſs they were made ſtrong," i. e. out of weakneſs felt and apprehended.

2. Humbly repreſent and bemoan your impotence before God, like Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. "I heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf, I was as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke." He felt his own impotence and averſion to what was good; and then he groans and looks up to God for power: "Turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." And, in the next verſe, we ſee how readily the Lord ſtept in with pity and help to him. Thus alſo did Jehoſhaphat, and found help, 2 Chron. xx. 12. "We have no might againſt this great company that cometh againſt us, neither

ther know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee; *q. d.* Though we be weak, yet we know thou art infinitely powerful, and full of compaſſion.

3. Uſe well any ſmall power you have, and it will increaſe. The right arm is more ſtrong and vigorous than the left, becauſe it is more exerciſed. So grace, the more it is exerciſed, the more it grows, Matth. xiii. 12. Prov. x. 29.

4. Wait on the Lord in the diligent uſe of the means; for it is promiſed, Iſa. xl. 31. "They that wait upon the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength. And in Pſal. xxvii. 14. "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thy heart: wait, I ſay, on the Lord." We muſt uſe, but not truſt to the means, but to God in the due uſe of them.

5. Walk tenderly, and guard againſt every known ſin; for ſin lets out the ſoul's ſtrength, as bleeding lets the ſpirit out of the body.

6. Be often looking, in a believing way, to the Mediator Chriſt, your Treaſurer and Head of influences; and derive all your ſupplies of ſtrength from, and thro' him alone.

7. Carefully entertain the Spirit's motions, and fall in with them. "Grieve not the ſpirit of Chriſt," which is ſent to ſtrengthen you; otherwiſe you will caſt away your ſtrength from you.

Laſtly, Acquaint yourſelves, O communicants, with the word of God, and its gracious promiſes of ſtrength; lay them up in ſtore againſt the time of need, and plead them humbly with God: For prayer, grounded on a promiſe, is likely to prevail. This was David's argument under his faintings, Pſal. cxix. 28. "Strengthen thou me according to thy word." And he had the experience of its prevailing with God, Pſal. cxxviii. 3. "In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul." I ſhall add no more, but conclude with the apoſtle's words, 1 Pet. v. 10. 11. "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered a while, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Amen.

SACRAMENTAL MEDITATIONS AND ADVICES,

GROUNDED UPON

SCRIPTURE-TEXTS,

PROPER FOR

COMMUNICANTS,

TO

Prepare their HEARTS, excite their AFFECTIONS, quicken their GRACES, and enliven their DEVOTIONS, on SACRAMENTAL OCCASIONS.

AND LIKEWISE USEFUL

To promote gracious DISPOSITIONS and RESOLUTIONS in CHRISTIANS, at all times, upon the Remembrance of a Crucified JESUS.

TOGETHER WITH A

SHORT CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY,

CONSISTING OF

Forty SCRIPTURE DIRECTIONS proper for all CHRISTIANS intending HEAVEN: And a variety of SCRIPTURE SONGS for ZION'S TRAVELLERS in their way thither.

[To which are added, by way of APPENDIX,]

I. A LECTURE concerning the Inſtitution of the LORD'S SUPPER, on 1 Cor. ix. 17. to the end.

II. A PREPARATION SERMON, from Joſh. iii. 5.

III. An ACTION SERMON, from Cant. ii. 4.

THE PREFACE.

THE eternal Son of God, when taking his leave of an ungrateful world, inſtituted the ſacrament of the Supper, as a lively reſemblance and memorial of his bloody ſufferings and death, in the room of his people; and alſo to be a bright and laſting evidence of the amazing love of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, to periſhing ſinners.

As God once ſent his Son into the world in a lowly habit, clothed with human fleſh, to ſave ſinners; ſo now he ſends him in a homely dreſs, clothed with the elements of bread and wine, to aſſure us of his love, and to engage us to come to him. Kings expect that their children will be reſpected, though their officers be neglected. Surely (ſaith God) "They will reverence my Son:" They will make him welcome and hearken to him.

In this moſt auguſt ordinance of the New Teſtament, the great God approaches very near to us, and we to him; and yet it is to be deeply regreted, that many, who profeſs to believe this, come to it with ſo little thought and preparation, and with ſo much indifferency and careleſſneſs of ſpirit. Oh, ſhall we adventure ſo near the great God, who is infinitely holy, in whoſe ſight the heavens are not pure, and in whoſe preſence the ſun and ſtars are dimned, and the brighteſt ſeraphims do gather in their wings, and account themſelves as little flies before him! And ſhall we, who are creatures ſo mean and ſo vile, be careleſs and unconcerned, when we make the neareſt approach to this great and holy God, that we can make on this ſide heaven!

Ought we not to go bluſhing, aſhamed and deeply humbled on many accounts, and particularly for our ingratitude for redeeming love, that "love which paſſeth knowledge;" and for our contempt of "God's unſpeakable gift," the greateſt ſin in the world; yea, we ſhould go wondering that we are out of hell, for many thouſands are burning there, who have not ſinned ſo heinouſly in making light of precious Chriſt as we have done.

Moreover, reader, conſider if you go to this ordinance unpreparedly, or with indifference, you not only make light of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but you are "guilty of the body

body and blood of the Lord," 1 Cor. iii. 27. Surely, that word may cauſe you to quake and tremble; blood-guiltineſs of any ſort is a dreadful ſin, and eſpecially to be guilty of the "blood of the Lord." Murder is a ſin that cries for vengeance on the actor, and gives God no reſt till he puniſh it, Gen. iv. 10. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth." If it be a crying ſin to murder a common perſon, what muſt it be to murder a king? "Who can ſtretch forth his hand againſt the Lord's anointed, and be guiltleſs," 1 Sam. xxvi. 91. O then what a crime muſt it be to murder the eternal Son of God, who is thy exalted King, thy everlaſting Father, thy dear Redeemer, and thy God, who gave thee a being. Child-murder is a heinous crime, but, what Chriſt-murder is, no tongue can tell! If on him that ſlew Cain (that wicked man) vengeance ſhould be taken ſevenfold; what vengeance will be taken on him that crucifies afreſh the Lord of glory? This conſideration ſhould make all of us afraid of careleſs and unworthy communicating.

If we would communicate worthily, we muſt be earneſt, not only for the life of grace, but alſo for the livelineſs of grace; not only for the truth and ſincerity of grace, but likewiſe for the activity and vigorous exerciſe of grace. So that a believer himſelf doth not eat and drink worthily, unleſs the grace that is in him be excited and exerciſed at this ordinance. There muſt be not only faith in the truth of it, but there muſt be faith realizing, applying, appropriating, and making uſe of Chriſt's death and purchaſe in this ordinance. Not only muſt there be a diſpoſition of ſoul to be humbled for ſin, but there muſt be actual mourning and melting of heart for ſin, and for particular ſins, when we look on him we have pierced by them. Not only muſt there be a principle of love to Chriſt, but alſo an exciting of love to flame out to Chriſt, who loved us and gave himſelf for us.

Worthy communicating being a work of ſuch importance, the following Scriptural Meditations and Advices are humbly offered to Chriſtians, as an help in their preparations for it. Reading and thinking much on the ſubjects here propoſed, may, through God's bleſſing, be uſeful to promote their habitual preparation for the holy ſupper. Chriſt's body and blood herein exhibited, are pure and

and holy things, and ſhould be received in prepared and cleanſed hearts. His body never ſaw corruption in the grave, nor will be mixed with it in hearts where corruption is allowed. It lay in a virgin-womb, and in a virgin-ſepulchre, and will ſtill be entertained in virgin-ſouls and affections; in hearts purified and conſecrated to God. In thoſe Chriſt chuſes to reſide, and not in thoſe where ſin and the world, with the luſts thereof, are harboured. Oh, had we grace to maintain and cheriſh the fear of God, and the love of Chriſt habitually in our ſouls, we might, without much pains, be prepared for coming to him at his table.

Did we always bear in our minds, that ſacramental occaſions are ſolemn appointments, and Bethel-meetings with God, for renewing covenant, and entertaining fellowſhip and communion with him, we would guard more againſt formality creeping in upon us in our preparations for, and in our attendance upon this ordinance, than, alas, we do. Oh, ſuch formality will provoke the Maſter of our ſolemn feaſts to withdraw from them, and then what poor, dry, melancholy, and lifeleſs things, will they be? What are ſacraments without Chriſt's preſence in them? O let us never be ſatisfied with communion-ſabbaths, without communion with Chriſt in them.

On the other hand, if we would keep up communion with Chriſt in theſe ordinances, let us beware of relying on our previous pains or preparations, either for our right performing of our duty, or for our acceptance in it: For we are never more ready to miſcarry, and to be diſappointed, than when we are guilty of this reſting. Sundry go to the Lord's table with great humiliation for ſin, and yet come away without comfort: Why? becauſe they make a Chriſt of their ſorrow. O what worth can we ſee in our beſt preparations, confeſſions, prayers, tears, humiliations, &c. if we compare them with the law of God? We have more cauſe to be aſhamed of them, than to lay any ſtreſs on them. Could we renounce all ſelf-confidence, and diſclaim all our proviſion in point of dependence, and caſt ourſelves wholly on Chriſt for ſtrength, through-bearing and acceptance, we would have better ſucceſs at the Lord's table, than commonly we have.

We are never more fit for this holy table, than when we are moſt humbled, and moſt aſhamed of ourſelves, becauſe of our unfitneſs for this ſolemn approach; and we

are

are never leſs fit than when we think ourſelves moſt fit and prepared for the duty. A holy deniedneſs to all ſelf-ſufficiency, and a deep ſenſe of unworthineſs and unfitneſs, is the beſt preparation we can attain to for this ſolemn ordinance. Let us make holy David our pattern, when going to partake, Pſal. lxxi. 16. "I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only." And let us pray with the ſpouſe, Cant. iv. 16. "Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out." Amen.

DUNDEE,
AUG. 1747.

SACRAMENTAL

SACRAMENTAL MEDITATIONS.

MEDITATION I.

From Heb. xi. 7. *By faith Noah prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe.*

THOUGH the flood, that drowned the old world, was at many years diſtance, yet Noah was moved with fear at God's warning him of it, and prepared an ark for his ſafety. And ſhall not unconverted, unbelieving ſinners, who have a far more terrible flood threatened againſt them, and may be only a few days diſtant, take warning, and provide with all ſpeed for their ſafety? O ſhall I, a wretched, guilty ſinner, take reſt, while I am within the flood-marks of God's wrath, and not ariſe in time to provide an Ark to flee to for my ſafety? But, O good news, I have not the Ark to provide, it is prepared to my hand: God, in his infinite wiſdom and pity, hath made ready an Ark long ago for loſt ſinners of Adam's race to fly to; and now it is completely furniſhed and finiſhed, and all things are ready, ſo that I have nothing to do but go and take poſſeſſion.

O what had become of me, and other periſhing ſinners, had we the Ark to build for ourſelves? Nay, the whole creation had not been able or ſufficient for this purpoſe. How ſoon would the raging flood of divine wrath ſweep away all the arks of men or angels' build-

ing! But thanks be unto God for ever, for the excellent well built Ark of God's deviſing, for the many ſpacious rooms and ſafe lodging-places within it, for the ſuitable accommodation and plentiful proviſion laid up therein, and for the door opened in the ſide thereof for periſhing ſouls to enter by. The ſalvation of ſinners by a crucified Chriſt, is a well-ordered ſcheme, a beautiful contrivance! bleſſed be the infinitely wiſe Contriver for it. I ſee all things in Chriſt crucified neceſſary for me: he is made of God to men, "wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption." There is in him infinite wiſdom to guide me, a ſpotleſs righteouſneſs to cover me, precious blood to waſh me, the Holy Spirit to ſanctify me, his good word to direct me, his juſt laws to govern me, and his infinite fulneſs to ſupply all my needs:—Safe and happy then would I be, were I found in him. O that, upon trial by ſcripture-marks, I could conclude myſelf to be within the Ark, to wit, a *crucified Jeſus*.

Can I ſay, I have been warned of God, and moved with fear to fly to this Ark? Have I diſcovered my ſhelterleſs ſtate by nature, the waves and billows of wrath riſing and rolling againſt me? Have I ſeen my own inability to provide an Ark for myſelf, and the excellency and fitneſs of the Ark of God's providing? Have I been made willing to abandon all falſe arks, and earneſtly inquiſitive how to get into the true Ark? Have I been made willing to uſe all appointed means for this end, to read, hear, meditate, pray, repent, believe, eſſay to climb up the ſides of the Ark, and preſs to get in at the door thereof? Have I been willing to venture my all in the Ark, like Noah, notwithſtanding of the diſcouragements, ſcoffs and hatred of the world, for ſo doing? Have I willingly acquieſced, ſheltered, and lodged my ſoul in God's Ark, and been made to ſay, "This is my reſt for ever, here will I dwell?" Come what floods will, Chriſt ſhall be my Ark, his righteouſneſs alone my refuge and hiding place.

Alas! upon impartial ſearch, have I not cauſe to fear, that I have not yet fled to the Ark, but am ſtill expoſed to the devouring flood? And can I be eaſy or quiet

quiet in ſuch a caſe? Can I forbear crying, What ſhall I do to get into the Ark Chriſt? Nay, what would I not do to get into it? Lord, what would thou have me to do? Wouldſt thou have me to humble myſelf, confeſs, mourn, part with ſin, cloſe with Chriſt in all his offices? Preſcribe, Lord, what thou wilt, I will not ſcruple what thou enjoins me, but obey thee without reſerve. I am reſolved upon it, whatever it coſt me, that the ſolicitations of the fleſh, the temptations of ſatan, the ſcoffs, reproaches or perſecutions of the world, ſhall not ſtop me from flying to the Ark; I would break through all theſe to be found in it. Lord, increaſe and ſtrengthen my faith for that end; and help my unbelief.

O how ſuitable is the Ark Chriſt to my deſtitute and miſerable condition: In myſelf I want all things, but I ſee a ſupply for all my wants in the Ark. I am poor, but I ſee gold in the Ark to make me rich: I am wounded by ſin, but I ſee balm in the Ark to heal my wounds: I am blind, but there is ey-eſalve in the Ark to make me ſee: I am periſhing with hunger, but I ſee bread in the Ark to ſatisfy me: I am naked, but in the Ark there is white raiment to clothe me: I am polluted, but in the Ark there is a fountain to waſh me: I am expoſed to more terrible floods than Noah was, but I ſee the Ark Chriſt can ſave me from them all: Noah's ark ſaved him only from a flood of water, but the Ark Chriſt ſaves from a flood of the curſes of the law, and the wrath of God, which will ſweep away all the unbelieving world. This flood roſe, ſwelled high, and daſhed furiouſly againſt our Ark; but the Ark was proof againſt it, and ſheltered all the elect world from the flood; ſo that not one drop did light on them. O how excellent is this Ark! for it can ſave me from being overwhelmed or carried away with any flood, and particularly it can ſave me from being carried away with a flood of Satan's temptations, which ſweeps away many; or with a flood of indwelling corruption; with a flood of error; with a flood of profanity; or with a flood of neutrality and indifferency about ſpiritual concerns: By which floods, multitudes

are deſtroyed. Let me then by faith fly to this bleſſed ark, where all believers are preſerved from theſe deſtroying floods. Behold I run, I fly: May Jeſus draw me, and help me in.

Bleſſed for ever be the God of heaven, for providing ſuch an Ark for fallen ſinners upon earth. I deſire to count all things but loſs and dung, that I may be found in this Ark, among the *the preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus*, whom no flood can reach. However this Ark may be ſlighted by the world, I'll prize it above all things, and count them for ever happy who get into it, ſeeing God declares it, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus. The ark was ſlighted by the old world, and Noah ridiculed for preparing it for himſelf and his houſe; but it ſoon appeared that Noah was the wiſeſt man that then lived upon the earth. Few there were that entered with Noah into the ark, and no doubt were reproached and mocked for their ſingularity; but ſoon was the world perſuaded that they were the only wiſe and happy men in it. Better ſurely it was to have followed the eight perſons that went into the ark, than to have joined eight millions of thoſe who were drowned in the flood. Should I be ſo fooliſh as follow the old world in undervaluing the Ark, I muſt lay my account to be ſhut out and periſh with them too: Wherefore, I will not fear the reproach of men, for being ſingular in my eſteem for glorious Chriſt. May I be numbered among that happy company (however few they be) who love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity, and will bleſs God eternally for providing this Ark for drowning men! May I be one that will ever bleſs my lovely and loving Jeſus, that pitied me and took me in, when others were waſhed off from the ſides of the Ark, as adhering only to it by a dead and formal profeſſion! May I be one that will ever ſing to his praiſe, O amazing free love! that pitied and diſtinguiſhed me, when the flood came; that graciouſly drew and determined me in ſuch a manner, that I got into the Ark and was ſafe, when many others were waſhed off and periſhed for ever!

MEDITATION

MEDITATION II.

From 2 Pet. ii. 4. *God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, but caſt them down to hell.*

HOW admirable, free and diſtinguiſhing, is the love of God to mankind ſinners, in pitying them in their low and loſt eſtate! O how different is the caſe of *fallen men* upon the earth, from the caſe of *fallen angels* in hell, and that of damned ſouls there! Manna is rained down upon us, while an eternal ſhower of fire and brimſtone falls down upon them. They are bound in chains of darkneſs, whilſt thou, Lord, art drawing us with cords of love. Thou didſt not ſpare angels, nor take on their nature; but thou haſt ſpared us, married our nature, and exalted it to the heavens. They continue without hope under the deluge of God's wrath, whilſt the pleaſant rainbow of the ſacrament appears to us, as a token of God's covenant of grace, and of his willingneſs to ſecure us from that overflowing flood, by the interpoſition of his dear Son in our nature. O how welcome ſhould we make that goſpel rainbow!

Lord, thy wrath ſoon broke out againſt the angels that fell; thou didſt puniſh them immediately upon their ſinning againſt thee. Thou didſt not wait for their repentance, nor make any offer of mercy to them but, preſently upon their firſt offence, didſt condemn them to everlaſting chains of darkneſs. O how far different is thy manner of dealing with us! Long haſt thou waited upon us after we have ſinned; yea, thou haſt followed us with thy mercy, after many refuſals of it, and even after our trampling the precious blood of Chriſt under our feet! Marvellous and peculiar is thy mercy to fallen men in reſpect of fallen angels! Glory to ſovereign free mercy, that thou didſt not caſt us off for ever without a parley, as thou didſt them; but waits to be gracious to us, long ſtretching out thy hand, and calling

calling us to repentance, ſaying, "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?"

Againſt the ſinning *angels* God was ſo provoked, that he reſolved within himſelf, and hath kept his reſolution ever ſince the beginning of the world, and will keep it to all eternity, that he will not ſo much as enter into a parley with thoſe creatures, however glorious they once were, nor be reconciled to them upon any terms; yea, that he will hear of no terms, but will revenge himſelf upon them to all eternity. May not then the hearing of this cauſe us to quake and tremble? for, why might not the Lord have dealt with us in the ſame manner, who were far more wretched and miſerable creatures than angels? Surely, if a king be ſo angry with an offending *nobleman*, that was once his ſpecial favourite, as to baniſh him from court, and afterwards hear of no terms of reconciliation with him: Would not a *footman* or mean ſervant, that had offended, when hearing of this, begin to dread, and ſay, O what will become of me, a poor man, when the king treats his peers ſo ſeverely? I may ſurely deſpair of a remiſſion or reconciliation with him. So, in like manner, we poor clay worms, upon hearing of God's ſeverity to fallen angels, might have been overwhelmed with fear, if the Bible had not told us, that the Son of God his "delights were with the ſons of men;" that "verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took upon him the ſeed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16. and that he gave himſelf to be a ſin-offering and ſacrifice for men! Aſtoniſhing news! Glory to God for theſe glad-tidings of great joy.

O admirable love to *Adam's* rebellious offſpring! Haſt thou, Lord, paſt by angels, and remembered us in our low and loſt eſtate! and in thy infinite compaſſion become our Surety, to appeaſe divine juſtice for our heinous ſins, when no other ſacrifice could do it! O what ſhall we render to thee for this diſtinguiſhing love! Surely our condition in *Adam* was no better than that of the *angels* who left their firſt eſtate. By nature we were in a moſt dreadful caſe, lying like *Iſaac*, bound on the altar, to be a ſacrifice to the juſtice of God, and the ſword of juſtice lift up to give us the killing blow, until the Son of

of God diſcovered himſelf, as the *ram* caught in the thickets, and calling to juſtice, Hold thy hand, looſe them, and bind me in their room; I'll be the ſacrifice for them. In chooſing fallen men, and not angels, God gave an amazing inſtance of the ſovereignty of his grace, that would be merciful to whom he would be merciful; he would paſs by the ſuperior nature, and chooſe the inferior; prefer veſſels of clay to veſſels of gold! What can we ſay? Nothing, but wonder at God's free grace! Unſpeakable love! Lord, it had been much if thou hadſt provided an angel to mitigate our ſufferings in hell, by giving us drops of water to cool our tongue; but that thou ſhouldſt have condeſcended to come and change rooms with us, ly in hell for us, and ſuffer the very pains and agonies due to us, is *love that paſſeth knowledge.*

Lord, when I conſider thy diſtinguiſhing pity, and low ſtoop, to purchaſe and recover ſuch clods of earth and ſin with thy blood and agonies, I am amazed at thy love, confounded at my own ingratitude, and aſhamed at the coldneſs and hardneſs of my heart! Oh! was Chriſt willing to change rooms with the like of me, and ſhall not I be willing to change rooms with him, and at his demand to part with the filthy rags of my ſins, and take on the robe of his righteouſneſs? O ſhall not this amazing love of Chriſt conſtrain me to love him again, and live to him that died for me? Shall it not conſtrain me to think on him? conſtrain me to cloſe with and truſt in him? conſtrain me to commend him? conſtrain me to hate and avoid his enemy ſin? conſtrain me to adhere to Chriſt's truths and ways? to perſevere in prayer, praiſe, and holy walking?

Are fallen angels left, and fallen men pitched upon to be the monuments of free grace, to fill up the vacant rooms which angels fell from? What ſhall I ſay to this, but, "even ſo, Father, for ſo it pleaſed thee:" Let thy ſovereign free grace be the eternal ſong of both men and angels. "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory." Bleſſed be God, that I hear this joyful ſound of reconciliation with fallen men,

and

and of a treaty of peace carried on with them: The devils never heard, and never will hear ſuch news.—But, O if I come not in, and accept of the terms and offers made to me in the goſpel, I will put myſelf in a worſe caſe than the devils; For it cannot be charged upon fallen angels, as on fallen men, that God was willing to be reconciled to them, and they would not. Now, then, when the goſpel-treaty is proclaimed, God forbid I be found guilty of refuſing his terms, ſcorning his offers, and defying his threatenings. O how ſhall I eſcape, if I neglect ſo great and wonderful ſalvation as is tendered to me? Neglect it, Lord, I dare not, I will not. Lo, I come, I accept, I embrace, I take hold of thy covenant, and the ſeal of it tendered to me: I renounce the old covenant, I break league, this day, with all thine enemies, I proclaim war againſt them: I cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus, both as my righteouſneſs and my ſtrength: I make a full and free ſurrender and reſignation of myſelf unto the Lord, to be his, and his only, in all I am, and in all I enjoy, to be ordered and diſpoſed of for his glory and ſervice. Lord, I am thine; I will not be my own, I will not be the world's, but I will be thine, thine only, and thine wholly; thine to love thee, ſerve and obey thee, without reſerve: Since thou wouldſt have no nature but mine, I will have no will but thine. I renounce my own will, and take thine for my rule. Lord, I am thine, O ſave thou me; and I will trumpet forth the praiſes of free grace and redeeming love for ever. Amen.

MEDITATION III.

From Pſal. cxlviii. 20. *He hath not dealt ſo with any nation.*

THE nation of Iſrael was ſingularly privileged above others; they were taken into covenant with God, they had God's word and ordinances, the means of converſion

ſion and ſalvation; they had the goſpel-revelation, the knowledge and promiſes of the Meſſiah. But we, under the New-Teſtament times, and in Britain, are yet more peculiarly privileged with clearer light and diſcoveries of the Meſſiah, than the nation of Iſrael had. They lived under a darker and harſher diſpenſation of the covenant of grace by Moſes, whoſe firſt miracle was the turning of *water into blood*; but we live under the clearer and ſweeter diſpenſation of it by Chriſt himſelf, whoſe firſt miracle was the turning of *water into wine*, that chears the heart. The nation of Iſrael were called a people near unto God; but in goſpel-times we are allowed yet nearer acceſs to God, than they had. The children of Iſrael were not allowed ſo much as to touch the mount on which the Lord came down; the men of Bethſhemeſh had not liberty to look into the ark, the place of his reſidence: But, behold, we are allowed to take a near view and ſteady look of a crucified Jeſus in the ſacrament, who is "the image of the inviſible God, the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon." Yea, we have liberberty not only to look to him, but alſo to touch him, handle his wounds, embrace his perſon, and lodge him in our hearts.

The advantage of a clear revelation of a crucified Chriſt in the goſpel-ordinances, and particularly in the Lord's ſupper, is an invaluable privilege. If the royal pſalmiſt admired the divine goodneſs in cauſing the ſun, moon and ſtars, to ſhine in the firmament for man's behoof, and therefore cries, "What is man, that God is thus mindful of him?" How far greater cauſe have we to ſay ſo, when we obſerve how God cauſes the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhine ſo brightly in the firmament of goſpel ordinances, and *the day ſpring from high to viſit us* with the light of ſaving knowledge, and of eternal ſalvation through him? Again, if the Pſalmiſt exalts God's goodneſs ſo much in his giving the beaſts of the field, fowls of the air, and fiſhes of the ſea to be food for man: What ground have we to admire and praiſe God's infinite mercy, in giving us the fleſh and blood of his own dear Son to preſerve the lives of our ſouls?

O what rare goſpel-feaſts are theſe which God allows us in the land wherein we dwell! And O how wonderfully are they preſerved and continued with us, from time to time, by the miraculous working of God's mercy and power! While others are viſited with cleanneſs of teeth, and a famine of the word of God? *He hath not dealt with every nation* as with us.

And, Lord, how diſtinguiſhing is thy goodneſs unto me a moſt unworthy creature! By thy mercy I was born in a valley of viſion; and I dwell in a lightſome Goſhen, when multitudes of others, in Pagan and Popiſh nations, are covered with Egyptian darkneſs, and ſit in the region of the ſhadow of death; I hear heaven's free market-days of grace proclaimed, when others have ſilent ſabbaths; I am invited to a rich banqueting-houſe, when others are ſtarving for the want of the bread of life. O that I could value my mercies aright! It is a great privilege that I am allowed to ſpeak to the great God in prayer, and to hear him ſpeak unto me in his word! But ſtill he puts a greater honour upon me, by calling me to enjoy intimate communion and fellowſhip with himſelf, yea, inviting me to ſit down with him at his table, and feaſt upon the fruits of Chriſt's death, and benefits of his purchaſe! Oh, I am not worthy of the leaſt crumb that falls from the children's table, and far leſs of being ſet down at the table with the children to eat of their bread, and ſhare of the dainties provided for them by their heavenly Father. If Peter, after having ſeen Chriſt's glory, and his own vileneſs, judged himſelf unworthy to be in the ſame ſhip with Chriſt, and therefore cried, "Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man." How ſhould I, the chief of ſinners, adventure to ſit at the ſame table with him, and feed upon his fleſh and blood! Amazing condeſcenſion!

O what diſtinction doth God make among nations, in ſending the goſpel to them, with clear views and preſſing offers of a crucified Jeſus to periſhing ſouls? And what cauſe have we in theſe nations, of admiring the diſtinguiſhing goodneſs of God to us in this reſpect beyond others! Would we not admire his goodneſs, if he

he cauſed the ſun ſhine only in our horizon, as he did on Goſhen; when other nations were covered with darkneſs, as the land of Egypt was? Yet ſurely the goſpel ſun is by far a greater mercy. The goſpel is indeed a *joyful ſound*, Pſal. lxxxix. 15. ſo called, with alluſion to the ſilver trumpets made uſe of under the law to call people to the ſolemn aſſemblies, and to intimate to them the feaſt of the paſſover, which repreſented the love and ſufferings of the Meſſiah. A joyful ſound the goſpel is, indeed, if we compare it with the ſound of the law's curſes and threatenings thundered from mount Sinai againſt ſinners. But, behold, this joyful ſound, bringing ſalvation, comes from heaven, even to heaven daring ſinners, who had openly rebelled againſt the God of heaven! Glad news! bleſſed are they who know the joyful ſound; know it ſo, as to believe it, admire it, entertain it, and comply with it ſo as to receive Chriſt offered therein to loſt ſinners.

Lord, I make this joyful ſound welcome; it is muſic to my ear, and a cordial to my heart. I reckon their feet beautiful who bring ſuch glad tidings to my ſoul. O how welcome would men make them, who would bring them an invention, that would ſecure their eſtates from conſuming, their houſes from burning, or their bodies from dying! But here we have the ſure news of an invention that doth much more for us than all this; even a device that ſecures us from hell, and enſures us of heaven. Ought I not then cheerfully to comply with this joyful ſound, and fall in with the call thereof? God forbid that I ſhould ſtop my ears at it; it had been better for me then, never to have heard of it at all: How dreadful would my caſe be at the judgment day! How would devils, Turks, Heathens, and my own conſcience, upbraid me in hell to all eternity, for my folly in ſlighting this joyful ſound! Surely God may ſlight the mournful ſound of their prayers in the time of diſtreſs, who ſlight the joyful ſound of his goſpel in time of health. But, Lord, I bleſs thee for it, I love it, I receive it, I welcome it, I fall heartily in with it, and will admire it for ever.

MEDITATION IV.

From 1 John iii. 1. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us!*

IN the amazing work of our redemption, we are called to behold and admire both the love of the Father, and the love of the Son. Unſpeakable love of the Father! that contrived our redemption, pitched upon and gave the Redeemer. O how readily accepted he of the Son's offer to ſuffer and ſatisfy infinite juſtice for ſin in our room! Upon our fall he might juſtly have ſaid, No, the ſoul that ſins ſhall die perſonally, I'll admit of no ſurety. But glory to the bleſſed Father, ſuch was his love to us, that when the dear Son ſaid, Father, I will be the Surety for ſinners of mankind, let my blood be ſhed for theirs, let the blow light on me, let me die in their room; ſuch was the love and pity of the Father to us, that he preſently accepted the offer, held our Redeemer at his word, ſaying, Be it as thou haſt ſaid: "Awake, O ſword, againſt the man that is my fellow; ſmite the ſhepherd," and ſpare the ſheep. I'll glorify my juſtice upon my own dear Son, rather than upon them. Amen, ſaid the bleſſed Son of God: I will be the ſacrifice!

O love unſpeakable, both in the Father and the Son! human love, angelical love, is nothing to it! O what is the love of creatures one to another, to this love of God to man! aſtoniſhing love! that the eternal Son of God, intreated by no man, but hated of all men, ſhould in his love and pity intreat for men: yea, undertake and die for them, when enemies to God and all that is good! "O the breadth, O the length, O the depth, O the height of this love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge!" I may poſſibly feel it, but I cannot fathom it. The love of creatures is nothing to the love of

of Chriſt. It was great love that Jacob bore to Rachel, that he endured the heat of ſummer, and froſts of winter for her: But all this was nothing to the winter-ſtorm which Chriſt ſuffered for us. It was extraordinary love that Jonathan had to David, that he would peril his life to avert his father's wrath from him: But what was that to Chriſt's love, that took on his eternal Father's wrath, which was infinitely greater than Saul's, and actually laid down his life to avert that dreadful ſtorm of wrath from us! What love was it that made him ſtand before the mouth of hell-furnace, and ſuffer himſelf to be ſcorched with it in the moſt terrible manner, that he might ſtop the flame from breaking out on us! Behold him receiving the ſword of juſtice into his bowels, to prevent its being ſheathed in our hearts! Behold, when the ſea of God's wrath raged and was tempeſtuous, threatening to ſwallow us all up; Chriſt came, and ſaid, like Jonah, Spare theſe poor ſinners! take me up, and caſt me into the ſea in their ſtead, that the ſtorm may be appeaſed againſt them! Chriſt was willing to be caſt into the ſea of wrath, to be a bleſſed plank of mercy for ſhipwrecked ſouls to grip to, and be ſaved.

Admirable love of the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who would give his dearly beloved Son, out of free love and pity to man, to die and ſuffer wrath for him! and would chuſe rather to ſee his dear Son agonizing and ſtruggling under infinite wrath for a time, than to ſee an elect world ſtruggling in hell among devils for ever! O who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord! who can ſhew forth all his praiſe! O Father of mercies, from all eternity thou foreſaw our fall and miſery, and, in thy wiſdom and love, didſt contrive a noble remedy for us: Thou even didſt provide a Surety for man before the debt was contracted, a Saviour for him before he was loſt; and by this glorious Surety thou haſt found out a noble way to ſatisfy both the demands of juſtice and intreaties of mercy, and glorify both theſe divine perfections at once. By this, Lord, we know thou loveſt us, that thou haſt not with-held thy Son, thine only Son, from us, to be ſacrificed in

our

our room, and graciouſly calleſt us to commemorate thy love, in providing this ſacrifice, at thy holy table. Inſtead of this, thou mighteſt juſtly have called multitudes of us together, to make us a ſacrifice to thy juſtice for our heinous ſins and rebellious againſt heaven. But behold, thou calleſt us together to thy table upon a quite other deſign, even to intimate to us a ſacrifice of thy own providing, ſufficient for us all; and actually to behold the bleeding victim of the innocent Lamb of God, who willingly, at his Father's call, gave himſelf to be ſlain to take away the ſins of the world! Lord, what didſt thou ſee in ſuch creatures, to make thee to love us after this manner? Nothing, but much to make thee lothe us; yet the time when we were moſt lotheſome, thou madeſt it the time of love! Surely "thy thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as our ways!" How aſtoniſhing was thy conduct in redeeming us when loſt? And worſe are we than devils, if we be not raviſhed with the love of the Father in projecting our redemption, and with the love of his eternal Son, that made him leave his glory in heaven, and even wade through hell to ſave the dregs of the creation.

O what manner of love is this, that the Father did give his eternal Son, to die for thoſe who deſerved eternal wrath for their rebellion and treaſon againſt himſelf! When notice was firſt given in this lower world, that the Son of God was coming down to it from heaven; what could have been expected, but that his buſineſs here would be to condemn the world, and haſten the execution of thoſe he found in arms againſt him? But, O who can think, and not wonder, that he ſhould have ſent him to ſuffer and die for ſuch as forfeited their lives, and deſerved to be ſlain; yea, for ſuch as were alienated from the life of God, and full of enmity againſt him, unworthy of any place of abode upon earth, and by their wickedneſs fully prepared for hell: O how ſurpriſing is it, that God would, in this our miſerable ſtate, ſend the Son of his love to die for us, to reſcue us from deſerving wrath, and purchaſe a new title for us to life and glory! Behold, what manner of love this is, that the juſt ſhould ſuffer for the unjuſt, the

the juſt Prince for the unjuſt rebels, that were in arms againſt him, the King of Glory for the children of diſobedience, the obedient Son for mortal enemies! O this is ſuch a manner of loving, that the higheſt tranſport of wondering cannot reach: "For ſcarcely for a righteous man will one dare to die; but God commends his love to us, in that, while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us," Rom. v. 7, 8.

O how am I able to hear, ſpeak, or think of this love, and my heart not burn with an admiring ſenſe of the freeneſs and riches of God's grace; and with a vehement hatred and indignation againſt my ſins, which contributed to pierce and crucify my glorious Redeemer! Can I be but raviſhed with love to him, when he comes to communicate his love to me at his table, and ſay, Behold how I have loved you, and given myſelf for you! I was "cut off, but not for myſelf:—I was wounded for your tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for your iniquities." It was for you I was betrayed, reviled, condemned, and crucified; for you my hands and feet were nailed to the tree, my head crowned with thorns, and my ſide pierced with a ſpear: And all this I ſuffered, that you might be ſaved from hell, and get ſin forgiven, and God reconciled to you for ever.

MEDITATION V.

From Pſalm viii. 4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him?*

WHEN David beheld the heavens, with its glorious luminaries, the ſun, moon, and ſtars, and the mighty works of God in the creation, and conſidered what a mean figure man made amongſt them; he admires God's condeſcenſion and goodneſs in his concern and pains about him, in his works of providence and redemption. Lord, what is man, fallen man, that thou ſhouldſt notice him ſo much? A poor, vile, ſinful worm! And yet how ſingularly minded and honoured

ed is he, in God the Son his undertaking to be his Cautioner and Ranſom? Had he done it for angels, it had not been ſo marvellous; but what is man, that God ſhould viſit him this manner! ſhould pay him a homely viſit in human nature, to ſee what ailed him, to hear his complaints, and know feelingly his wants and miſeries, that he might the better ſympathize with him, relieve, and ſupply him!

But who is this that comes to pay this viſit to man? even he that is King of kings, and Lord of Lords, who is infinite in majeſty and power, in riches and glory. How awful are the deſcriptions given us of him in the Bible! "Great is the Lord and of great power, his underſtanding is infinite. He calls the ſtars by their names. Whatſoever he pleaſed, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the ſeas, and all the deep places." And it is ſaid of his coming to judgment, Dan. vii. 10. "A fiery ſtream iſſued forth before him, thouſand thouſands miniſtred unto him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood before him." And yet this Almighty Perſon, the great God, condeſcends to clothe himſelf with our nature, and ſtoops to the very ground, in the moſt lowly manner, to pay a kind viſit to his rebellious creature, man, even man that is a worm; and when he gets not acceſs to him at firſt, he continues to ſtand and knock at his door. O how marvellous is this, that he who was Omnipotent, that could by a word have annihilated fallen man, and created a more amiable creature in all reſpects in his room, ſhould ſtoop ſo low to him! That he who was Omniſcient, and perfectly knew man's unworthineſs, his enmity, his ingratitude, and what unkind returns he would make for the greateſt kindneſs, ſhould court him ſo earneſtly! That the Judge of heaven ſhould come down from the bench, and put on the pannel's clothes, that he might anſwer and ſatisfy the law for him! That the great General of the armies of heaven, ſhould put himſelf in the room of a poor condemned deſerter, to ſuffer for him! That the Creator ſhould ſtoop to die for the creature, even the great God for a worm,—man, is love that ſwallows up our thoughts and language! What can we think!

what

what can we ſay of it! it is love that paſſeth knowledge! the moſt penetrating angel cannot fathom its height, its depth, its breadth, or its length! Why? for its height is infinitely higher than the higheſt heavens; for its depth, none can ſee its bottom, for it made him ſtoop as low as hell; for its breadth, it is as broad as the whole earth and the whole heavens, too; it comprehends all his people, even the pooreſt out-caſt on earth, as well as the higheſt ſaint in heaven; for its length, it never ends, but continues without interruption, notwithſtanding of provocations; nay, it is drawn out parallel with the longeſt line of eternity.

Lord, what is man, that thou ſhould have minded him, viſited him, and loved him ſo! A creature moſt unlovely, ugly and black as hell; that had got the image of God razed out, and the image of Satan pictured in its room. A creature lame and impotent, that could not riſe but as Chriſt lifted him, could not ſtand but as he upheld him, could not walk but as he led him, nor move but as he drew him. A rebel, that was in league with hell, that hated his Sovereign, and was plotting with the devil to pull the crown off his head. A creature made loathſome by ſin in God's ſight; yea, more loathſome than the new-born infant wallowing in its blood, than Job when full of boils, than Lazarus full of ſores, or a dead carcaſe crawling with worms. A creature that was undeſirous of God's viſit or help, and unwilling to accept of it; that ſaid to him, "Depart from us, we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways." A creature that contemned his love, rejected his offers, and trampled his blood. Who would have pitied ſuch a creature? one ſo poor, ſo vile, ſo miſerable! It had been much to have given him an alms; but for the Son of God to give his life for him, may ſtrike men and angels with aſtoniſhing ſurpriſe for ever. "Lord, what is man," a poor feeble crawling worm, "that thou ſhouldſt be mindful of him" after this manner? And what are we, that we ſhould ſtill have the offers of this love continued to us? O ſhall we ever make light of this love any more? "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

There is a parallel text, Pſal. cxliv. 3. "Lord,

what is man, that thou takeſt knowledge of him? Or the ſon of man, that thou makeſt account of him?" What a poor little thing is man, that thou ſhouldſt make ſo great account of him, put ſuch reſpect upon him above all other creatures, ſo as to condeſcend to ſtand in a nearer relation to him than to any other; as that of a Father, a Brother, a Huſband, a Friend, &c. yea more, thou haſt dignified this poor thing, man, ſo much, as to aſſume his nature into an ineffable, perſonal union with the ſecond Perſon of the ever glorious Trinity, whereby the nature of man is exalted above all the angels of heaven. It is not the angelical, but the human nature, which God hath choſen to tabernacle in: and now it is honoured ſo far, as to be ſet on the right-hand of the Majeſty on high. The great account God hath of this little thing, man, appears further in the great coſt he hath laid out for him. Why, God not only gives his creatures to die for man, to yield him food, but he alſo gives his Chriſt to die for him, to procure him eternal life. Again, how great is the goodneſs which God hath laid up for him hereafter? Eye hath not ſeen it, ear hath not heard it, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive how great it is! O what a favourite of heaven muſt this little creature, man, be!

Lord, who can but wonder at the honour thou haſt already put upon man, and at the favours thou ſtill deſigns for him! Great things haſt thou laid out, and great things haſt thou laid up for man. I admire thy low ſtoop in the viſit thou madſt man, in the incarnation of thy dear Son, and in thy viſit in the goſpel-proclamation, and offer of pardon through him! but ſet me ſtill plead for another viſit, in the effuſion of thy holy Spirit: This other viſit thou knoweſt is neceſſary, to make the former effectual to my ſalvation. May then thy holy Spirit work faith in me, to fall in with thy glorious device for the redemption of man in all points, to accept of thy love-offers, and reſt upon thy free promiſes of ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt, and his moſt perfect righteouſneſs. Amen.

MEDITATION

MEDITATION VI.

From 1 Cor. x. 4. *And that Rock was Chriſt.*

HOW uſeful was that rock in the wilderneſs to the Iſraelites ſojourning there, after it was ſmitten by Moſes's rod: When they were ready to periſh in that dry deſert, the rock ſent forth ſtreams of water to them in great abundance; ſtreams that followed them up hill and down dale, in all their turnings and windings, marches and countermarches, through that weary land. That rock was to them a lively type of Chriſt, who, being ſmitten by the rod of the law's curſes, whoſe miniſter Moſes was, ſends forth plentiful ſupplies to his people, while travelling in the wilderneſs of this world. There are two principal ſtreams of bleſſings which he ſends forth, moſt uſeful to us; to wit, a ſtream of *blood* for our *juſtification*, and a ſtream of the *Spirit* for our *ſanctification*. The channel or conduit-pipes, for conveying theſe ſtreams to us, are the ordinances and promiſes of the goſpel, and through theſe pipes theſe bleſſed ſtreams run freely to all true believers, from the Rock Chriſt, which was broached for them.

Oh, how coſtly was our redemption to our dear kinſman Jeſus Chriſt! dear did our ſouls coſt him! The Rock of our ſalvation was cleaved aſunder, rent and pierced to the very heart, to let out the waters of life to us, by which only we can be preſerved from eternal death, and obtain eternal life. How coſtly and precious are the ſtreams of Chriſt's blood and Spirit, his mercy and grace, which flow from the ſmitten Rock, and follow us through the wilderneſs in the free offers of the goſpel! They are life-giving ſtreams, fire-quenching, heart-ſoftning, ſoul-cleanſing, healing and fructifying ſtreams: Welcome, then, ſhould we make theſe ſtreams to our ſouls in this dry and thirſty land. Likewiſe the rock was to the Iſraelites a ſhadow from the heat, and a covert from tempeſts and ſtorms: So Chriſt our Rock ſcreens us from the ſcorching heat of vindic-

tive juſtice, and from the waves and billows of God's wrath. How neceſſary and uſeful is the Rock Chriſt to the ſouls of fallen men! Oh, let me never, Jeſhurun-like, lightly eſteem this Rock of our ſalvation. O let me never go to falſe rocks, or falſe ſtreams, for ſhelter or ſupply in ſtraits, when the true Rock is ſo near, and the ſaving ſtreams run ſo cloſe by my door; yea follow me daily in the channel of the word and ſacraments; ſtreams appointed by Heaven to anſwer all the caſes and ailments of loſt ſinners. O ſhall God in his tender mercy provide ſuch a wonderful remedy, ſet the Rock a-broach for me, and cauſe its ſtreams to follow me; and I ſhall be ſo fooliſh as turn my back upon them, and refuſe to apply or make uſe of them? O ſave me from ſuch curſed ingratitude and madneſs; "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

O how much ſhould my heart be affected at the holy table, when I ſee the Rock of my ſalvation ſmitten by the rod of juſtice, and behold the bloody ſpear pierce into his heart! O Rock of ages, what made thee to rend and cleave ſo! O brightneſs of thy Father's glory, who hath disfigured thee ſo? O River of life, clear as cryſtal, who hath troubled thee ſo? Oh, it was my ſins, my pride, my paſſion, my unbelief, my worldlineſs, my hardneſs, impenitence, &c. theſe were the cauſe of my Redeemer's ſufferings. The iniquities of ſinful men were laid upon him. When he was pierced, it was I that ſhould have been ſmitten. When he groaned and ſwate blood, I ſhould have howled and roared in hell. Harder than the rock is my heart, if I can ſee my dear Saviour ſmitten and pierced, and not mourn. O can I ſee his ſide and heart ſtreaming out blood, and mine eyes not pour out tears! Can I behold the Rock ſmitten for the ſins of men, and not adore the holineſs and juſtice of God manifeſted therein? Can I ſee my innocent Saviour wounded and ſlain for my ſins, and my ſoul not hate them; yea, ſhall I not be filled with horror and trembling at temptations to ſin?

Let me, at my Saviour's call, approach to his table, and come near to the Rock of my ſalvation, and hearken to the raging billows of infinite wrath, daſhing againſt

the Rock for my ſins, and even making the Rock to groan, ſweat and tremble under the preſſure. O what a dreadful hurricane of wrath did he endure, to keep the ſwelling ocean of divine wrath from overflowing guilty men? Surely my glorious Immanuel's groaning and ſweating blood under the ſtrokes of God's vengeance, is a greater evidence of the implacable wrath and indignation of God againſt ſin, than if he had hurled all the rocks of the creation into the midſt of the ſea; yea, or a thouſand worlds of men and angels into hell. O that, while I am beholding this ſight, I may tremble at ſin, come by faith under the ſhadow of this Rock, and run into the clefts of it for ſafety. Here I would be out of the reach of the law's curſes, and threatenings of wrath; and though I hear the roarings and daſhings of the ſea upon the Rock, yet a drop of it could not touch me.

O that I could imitate Moſes, when I am at the table, and ſmite the Rock by the rod of faith, that the ſtreams of Chriſt's blood and Spirit may flow out to me. What was his error will be my wiſdom, to ſmite the Rock oftner than once, to put forth many acts of faith on Jeſus Chriſt; ſuch as the diſcerning, aſſenting, approving, deriving, receiving, cloſing, embracing, truſting, pleading, applying, appropriating acts of true faith. May I, like Iſrael of old, Deut. xxxii. 13. be helped by faith to ſuck honey out of the Rock, and oil out of the flinty rock: Honey and oil, ſweetneſs and fatneſs, quickening and comfort. How ſhall I come at this honey and oil? only by ſucking: And how ſhall I ſuck, but by the mouth of faith? There is no ſucking without it. Neither can I ſuck by faith, unleſs God make me do it; for it is ſaid Deut. xxxii. "He made them to ſuck honey out of the rock." It is God that muſt give me both a mouth and ſtrength to ſuck, faith in the habit, and faith in exerciſe. It is only the blowings of the north and ſouth winds on the garden, that make the ſpices to flow out. "Awake, O north wind, come, thou ſouth, blow upon my garden;" bring faith to life, that I may ſuck honey from Chriſt in the ſacrament. Chriſt's breaſts are now full; O let not faith

be

be wanting; for if it be wanting, I can ſuck nothing. Bleſſed be God, Jeſus Chriſt, my Redeemer, is the author of faith. Lord, increaſe my faith, that I may ſuck honey from the Rock. 2. But what honey may I expect from it? *Anſ.* The honey of pardon of ſin. O how ſweet is this honey!—The honey of peace and reconciliation with God:—the honey of a law-biding righteouſneſs:—the honey of acceſs to, and communion with God:—the honey of enlargement of heart, and looſing of bands, &c. O let me ever ſuck from this Rock, the Rock that anſwers all my needs, and richly ſupplies all my wants. Let me alſo, under all my ſtraits, ſupport myſelf with the Pſalmiſt's cordial, Pſal. xviii. 46. "The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my Rock." Why ſhould believers in Chriſt droop in any condition, or look like dead men, while their Lord liveth, and their Rock ſtandeth? Bleſſed be God, my Rock is a living and laſting Rock: my hopes may die, my comforts die, my frames die, my gifts, my wealth, and my relations; theſe may all die; but I rejoice in the news, that my Lord will not die, nor my Rock fall. He once died for me, but he is riſen again: Good news! now he is alive, and will die no more.

MEDITATION VII.

From Zech. xii. 10. *They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn.*

THIS promiſe hath a reſpect, not only to the Jews when converted, but to all ſinners, when brought to repentance. We have all pierced Chriſt, in as much as our ſins were the cauſe of his death: "He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions." Now, a believing ſight of a pierced Saviour, is the beſt ſpring of ſorrow for ſin; it is faith's look to a crucified Chriſt, that will ſet us a mourning after a godly ſort. O that this promiſe may be made good to me at this time, that I may be helped to look believingly upon Chriſt, as pierced for my ſins, my pride, my paſſion, my unbelief, my carnality, my diſobedience,

diſobedience, my impenitence, my ſins of the heart, of the tongue, and of the life; that I may confeſs and bewail them, mourn and weep over them before the Lord. O! when ſhall I mourn and weep, if not now, when I am called to look upon my dear Lord and Surety at his table, all red with blood for my red and ſcarlet coloured ſins? I will not now ſtand afar off, and look to my Saviour on the croſs, as thoſe women who followed him from Galilee, Luke xxiii. 46. No, I will come cloſe to him, take a near look, and a narrow view of his wounds and piercings by my ſins, that I may ſee how wide and deep they are, that my eye may affect my heart with godly ſorrow for ſin.

When I look on him, I'll conſider the dignity of the Perſon pierced by and for me; he is the almighty Creator, the glorious Immanuel, the Plant of Renown, the Prince of the kings of the earth, that is pierced and nailed to a croſs. Jeremiah laments, in the captivity, that princes were hanged up by the hands, Lam. v. 12. But what were the princes of Iſrael to the Prince of peace, the King of glory, whom I ſee hanging nailed through the hands on the croſs, and his blood poured out like water upon the earth! O it is royal blood, the blood of God, that I ſee running down to ſatisfy juſtice for my ſins; and will not ſuch a ſight cauſe me to mourn for them? Can I look on my lovely Redeemer, ſtript naked, mounted up, and fixed with nails to a tormenting croſs? Can I ſee his head pierced with thorns, his back pierced with ſcourgings, his hands and feet pierced with big nails, his ſide pierced with a ſpear, and his heart pierced with ſorrows for my ſins, and my heart not mourn for them? Yet all the piercings and wounds of his ſacred body were but ſmall, to the piercings and agonies of his ſoul, when he drank of the cup of the Father's wrath for me, which made him cry out, "My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death.—My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" Can I behold this loving Jeſus, ſtanding in my room, bearing the wrath of a Deity for me, and my heart not bleed? Can I ſee him, when the ſword of juſtice was drawn to ſmite me, opening his breaſt to receive the

ſtroke

ſtroke into his heart, and my heart not melt within me? Lord, grant me ſuch a ſight by faith, of a wounded bleeding Saviour, as to make me a melting and mourning ſinner.

How can I leave this ſubject, until my heart be more affected? Had I been perſonally at mount Calvary, and with my bodily eyes had ſeen my dear Redeemer racked and nailed to the tree! Had I ſeen him lifted up between heaven and earth, that the nations might behold him, with his arms ſtretched out to embrace ſinners! Had I beheld his dying looks, and heard his dying groans! Had I ſeen his precious blood for many hours run from his wounded hands and feet to the earth! Could I have ſtood by with dry eyes, or an unconcerned heart, eſpecially when I had thought he was ſuffering all this out of love to me, for my ſins, and in my room!—Why then ſhould not I be as much concerned, when I come to his table to celebrate the memorial of that fearful tragedy, and look upon the outward ſigns which repreſent the ſame! Lord, give me faith's eye to behold the things ſignified thereby, even the bleeding and dying of the glorious Immanuel. And what kind of blood is it I ſee running down! It is innocent blood! precious blood! royal-blood! heart-blood! Nay, the blood of the eternal Son of God, one drop whereof is worth an ocean of our blood, and is of infinite value; and yet behold all this blood is ſhed for ſuch worms as I am! O can I think long upon this ſubject, and not find my heart pained with love, and be ready, with Joſeph, to ſeek a ſecret place to weep in? Had an ordinary man been executed for my crime, it would have affected me all my days; how much ſhould it touch me to ſee the Son of God put to death for me? The ſun fainted, the heavens mourned in black, the earth quaked, and the rocks rent, when this black tragedy was acted; how much more ſhould my heart rend and mourn at the repreſentation of it before my eyes! Surely my mourning ſhould be great, deep, and bitter mourning, as in the text, like the mourning of a parent for the death of an only ſon; or like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo! O what was the death of king Joſiah to the death of King Jeſus, the eternal

eternal Son of God! O my dear ſlain Lamb, ſhall I mourn and weep over thee!

Oh! can I ſee his blood run down in ſtreams, and my eyes not pour out ſome drops! Did Chriſt ſweat blood, and weep blood for my ſins, and ſhall not I weep tears for them? Shall I not give drops of water for ſtreams of blood! Alas! am I more ſparing of my tears for Chriſt, than Chriſt was of his blood for me! How faſt did the blood trickle down Chriſt's cheeks in the day he wore the crown of thorns for me? But how ſlowly do the tears fall from my eyes, when I commemorate his dying love! Can I ſhed tears in plenty for a dead child! and have I reſerved none for a ſlain Saviour?—Yea, ſlain by my ſins! How ſad is it to ſee ſo many weeping eyes at a funeral, and ſo many dry eyes at a communion-table: Alas, this is a ſad ſign of few looking by faith to him we have pierced! few ſenſible of the evil of their ſins, that were the hammers which drove in the nails into his body. O for a realizing act of faith, repreſenting all that the Lamb of God ſuffered, in the greateſt certainty and cleareſt evidence, that it is no deviſed fable. O for an applying and appropriating act of faith, to bring all home to myſelf, and ſay, "He loved me, and gave himſelf for me."

What a hard heart is this I have beyond others! Can I ſee others weeping and mourning over a ſlain Saviour, that ſit at the ſame table, eat the ſame bread, and drink the ſame cup with me, and cannot I get one tear! Is God come with his bottle waiting for my tears! Do others pour into it plentifully, and have I not one tear to drop into God's bottle! Lord, what means the hardneſs of my heart, and the dryneſs of my eyes, at the ſight of my Saviour's bleeding and dying for my ſins? When ſhould I mourn and weep, if not now? Was there ever ſuch an occaſion for tears? Oh! doth God intend to reſerve weeping for me in hell, where tears ſhall never be dryed up? This is what I deſerve, if I be hard-hearted and dry-eyed now. But, Lord, pity my hardneſs, and give me ſuch a look as thou gaveſt Peter, that may cauſe me to weep, and weep bitterly, at the remembrance of my ſins which pierced thee.

MEDITATION VIII.

From Luke xxii. 61, 62. *The Lord looked upon Peter.—And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

LORD, ſince my looks to thee are ſo ſlight, ſo wavering and inconſtant, that they make little or no impreſſion on my hard heart, do thou vouchſafe to look upon me with pity and with power; for thy looks are efficacious, and melt down the hardeſt heart. O give me ſuch a look as thou gaveſt to Peter, when he denied thee, and began to curſe and ſwear: A look that may bring me to myſelf, and cauſe me weep, and weep bitterly, at the remembrance of my ſins, my unbelief, my pride, my paſſion, my diſobedience, which pierced thee, my deareſt Lord and Saviour. "Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me," Pſal. cxix. 131. Chriſt's look to backſliding Peter was merciful, and full of compaſſion; his bowels yearned for his poor diſciple, when ready to fall into the devil's arms by a total and final backſliding, and prevents him ſpeedily. He would not let him ly long in that diſmal ſtate he fell into, as it were on the very brink of hell, but preſently plucks him back, and recovers him. In like manner, Lord, look on me, and recover me ſpeedily, when I fall into ſin, leſt my next ſtep be into hell.

Chriſt's look to Peter was a preventing look; he looked on Peter before Peter looked to his Saviour for mercy, and before he looked on himſelf, or upon his ſin, and the danger he was expoſed to by it. Glory to my Redeemer, that watches over his people, ſees and minds their danger, when they themſelves are little thinking upon it; he is more careful of them than they are of themſelves. How marvellous was Chriſt's love, that would be ſo concerned about Peter at ſuch a time, when he himſelf was amidſt his bloody enemies, and upon trial for his life: even then, as it were, he forgets his

his own danger, and takes notice of the danger of his ſervant. He being "the great Shepherd of his ſheep," ventures all to reſcue one of his flock out of "the mouth of the lion, and from the paws of the bear." O who would not deſire to belong to the flock of ſuch a faithful, loving, and compaſſionate Shepherd!

The look Chriſt gave Peter, was a convincing look; it laid open his ſin to him, with all its aggravations, which made it very bitter to him. It ſpoke ſuch language to him as this: "O Peter, what haſt thou done? Haſt thou caſt off thy Saviour? And haſt thou ſaid, thou knoweſt not me, who knew thee from the womb, and am going to die for thee? Doſt thou not know me, that called thee from thy nets, that impowered thee to preach the goſpel, and work miracles, that kept thee from ſinking in the waters? Am I not he thou ſaweſt ſhining on mount Tabor? Even he thou ſaidſt thou wouldſt rather die than deny?" O for ſuch a convincing look from Chriſt, that would pierce and melt my heart, and make me weep bitterly, both now and at his table, for my baſe ingratitude, in diſowning and piercing my dear Redeemer!

Chriſt's look to Peter, was a powerful and overcoming look, it conquered his will, looſed him from the world and ſin, and made him yield preſently to Chriſt: He was not able to hold out a moment longer, but, like Joſeph, ſeeks a ſecret place to weep in. O how powerful is a look from Chriſt! it is ſufficient to bow the moſt ſtubborn will, and melt the hardeſt heart; it can turn "the rock into ſtanding water, and the flint into a fountain of water," Pſal. cxiv. 8. How powerful was the look he gave to poor Jeruſalem, when "lying in their blood;" a look that cauſed them to live, Ezek. xvi. 6. How powerful was the look he gave to Zaccheus on the ſycamore tree, Luke xix. 5. O for ſuch a look as would bring me preſently down, in like manner, from the ſycamore of my ſelf-conceit and ſelf-righteouſneſs, and from my beſt beloved ſins and idols, and cauſe me receive Chriſt joyfully into my heart, and go with chearfulneſs to his table, and receive the ſeal of his covenant, ſaying, "My Lord, and my God."

Chriſt's look to Peter was a peculiar and diſtinguiſhing look; the power and grace of God went alongſt with it to change Peter's heart, and bring him to his right mind. Chriſt looked on many thouſands that were never the better of it. He looked on Judas after he betrayed him, and when he preſumed to kiſs him, and reproved him too for his baſe treachery: but neither that look nor reproof melted his heart. As the beams of the very ſame ſun hardens clay and ſoftens frozen earth; ſo a look from the ſame Jeſus, "the Sun of righteouſneſs," left Judas hard and impenitent, whilſt it ſoftened Peter's heart. The one went on in his villany, whilſt the other relented, and melted into tears. Why? he looked but on the face of Judas, but he looked on the heart of Peter. He looked upon the one with a frowning judicial look, but looked upon the other with a recovering and drawing look. Chriſt's look to Peter was accompanied with the inward influences of his Spirit on his heart, otherwiſe it had been ineffectual. O if he would vouchſafe ſuch a gracious look to my frozen heart, and ſoften it! I would fain bring my hard heart, and lay it before this bleſſed Sun, and wait until he draw by the cloud, look through, and ſhine upon it. Lord, I tremble to go to thy table with this hard heart, leſt thou ſhouldſt look on me with anger, as thou didſt upon theſe, Mark iii. 5. upon account of the hardneſs of their hearts. Lord, I deſire to be grieved for my heart-hardneſs, and to look to thee whom I have pierced by it. Give ſuch a look to my heart as thou gave to Peter's, melt it down into penitential tears, and cauſe me to go aſide "and weep bitterly."

Chriſt's look cauſed Peter to remember and think upon Chriſt's words to him. It is in and by his word that he works upon ſinners hearts. O if the Spirit would bring the word to my mind, ſet it powerfully home upon my conſcience, and ſo give the happy turn to my ſoul. Lord, help me, to lay up my words, and ponder them in my heart; and O bring them always ſeaſonably to my view, that when I fall, I may not ly long under ſin, nor continue in a ſtate of backſliding from

from thee. May I have ſuch a look from thee, as ſhall look all my idols out of countenance, and look my wandering heart into a right frame for the covenanting and communicating work: A look that ſhall put new life in all my drooping graces, and kindle ſuch a flame of love to Chriſt in my heart, and of indignation againſt ſin, as all the devils in hell ſhall never be able to quench. A look that ſhall make me weep while I live, for piercing Chriſt the Lamb.

Oh, ſhall others ſhed tears in plenty for ſin, and my eyes remain dry? Shall others get their hearts broken, and mine continue hard! Lord, thy grace is free; O how eaſy were it for thee to melt my heart, and moiſten my eyes: One touch of thy hand, nay, one look of thy countenance, one caſt of thine eye is ſufficient to do it. O turn unto me, and give me one merciful look; for thy ordinance will be lifeleſs, and loſt unto me, if thou look not on me. How can I go to thy table to behold Jeſus, my Surety, all red with blood for my red and ſcarlet-coloured ſins, while my heart doth not mourn, nor my eyes run down? Surely the ſtreams of my Saviour's blood deſerve to be lamented with tears of blood, and ſhall I not do it, at leaſt with tears of water! Was he wounded for my transgreſſions, and ſhall not my heart bleed, and eyes weep for his wounds given him by my ſins?

MEDITATION IX.

From Matth. xv. 27. *And ſhe ſaid, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs.*

THIS woman was a Canaanite, and lived among heathens, yet ſhe had greater knowledge and faith of the Meſſiah, than moſt of the Jews. Her faith, humility, patience, and reſolution, amidſt the greateſt diſcouragements, are here recorded for a pattern and encouragement to deſponding believers in all ages.

This woman was ſo ſenſible of her miſery, that ſhe addreſſes Chriſt with great earneſtneſs for help: She doth

doth not ſpeak calmly or coldly to Chriſt, but ſhe cried unto him, and followed him with her cries, ver. 22. 23. Surely, if I were duly affected with my ſpiritual wants and miſeries, I would ſpeak to God in no other language than that of cries and tears. O what cauſe have I to bewail my coldneſs and indifference in prayer, and the little ſenſe I have of my dangers and neceſſities, which are great beyond expreſſion.

This woman, notwithſtanding of her great earneſtneſs and ſtrong faith, met with very great trials and diſcouragements in her addreſſes to Chriſt.

1. Her firſt trial is Chriſt's ſilence to her, when crying to him for mercy, ver. 23. "He anſwered her not a word." Strange! not a word from a meek and merciful Saviour, that never put a poor ſinner, ſeeking for mercy, away from him before; but ſtill invited all to come to him for it. That is a ſore temptation, Lam. iii. 8. "When I cry and ſhout, he ſhutteth out my prayer." Believers are apt to think that God ſhuts out their prayers in wrath, when it is not ſo. Chriſt heard this woman, accepted her, was pleaſed with her, and ſtrengthened her to hold on in prayer, though he did not immediately anſwer her. He entertained her with ſilence to draw her on to be more importunate, and to try her faith, patience, and perſeverance, and thereby to teach us to be *followers of thoſe who through faith and patience* do now *inherit the promiſes*. Chriſt keeps the door bolted for a time, that we may knock the harder, Matth. vii. 7. *Aſk, ſeek, knock.* The choiceſt mercies come to us after the greateſt wreſtlings. Likewiſe I ſee here, that there is love in Chriſt's heart to wreſtling ſouls, even when frowns appear in his looks; wherefore let me take encouragement from him, *though he ſlay me, yet* to *truſt in him.*

2. Another ſore trial the woman met with, was the anſwer Chriſt gave his diſciples when interceding for her, whereby he ſeems to exclude her out of his commiſſion, ver. 24. "I am not ſent but to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael." The Jews were called *ſheep*, but the Gentiles, *dogs*. The Jews were indeed to have the free offer of Chriſt's grace and purchaſe. Though the

the woman might have taken Chriſt's words as a plain repulſe, yet ſhe ſtudies to put the beſt ſenſe on them ſhe can, and continues her importunity. Which teacheth us never to leave the throne of grace for any diſcouragement.

3. She gets a repulſe yet more ſharp than the two former, even after ſhe had come cloſe up to him, and fallen down at his feet, ſaying, *Lord, help me.* Then it is Chriſt ranks her among the dogs, thoſe that were without the covenant, profane and unclean. Now, one might think, ſhe is cut off by this word, and will inſiſt no more after it. Nay, ſhe takes hold of that word of reproach, and pleads upon it in the text, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog,* vile and unworthy; yet let me humby aſk the dogs room and privilege, even to creep beneath the childrens table, and gather ſome crumbs of mercy. O how much is contained here for our inſtruction and imitation!

1. What cauſe have we, O Lord, to bleſs thy goodneſs, that we Gentiles, of *dogs* are now become *children,* and allowed to come to thy table? And, at the ſame time to fear thy juſtice, ſince the Jews, of *children,* are now become *dogs,* and ſhut out as unclean! If they were cut off, who crucified thee in thy low eſtate, what may we expect, if, by our ſins, we crucify thee in thy glory? Let us not be high-minded, but fear.

2. Chriſt puts the ſtrongeſt faith of his people upon the ſharpeſt trials: He thinks fit, for his own glory, where he gives much grace, to try grace much.

3. Thoſe who are eminent in faith are moſt humble: this woman was ſo. O how humbly did ſhe plead with Chriſt? She threw herſelf on the ground, lay low at his feet, and from the duſt cried for help; ſhe claimed nothing, only begged for mercy. And when Chriſt ſpurned her from his feet, calling her *a dog,* ſhe doth not murmur nor complain of his harſh carriage, but humbly takes with the charge; *Truth, Lord,* thou doſt not miſcal me, nor call me ſo bad as I am, *I am a dog,* a moſt vile and unworthy creature, and have no right to the children's bread, and muſt ſtarve, if thou haſt not mercy on me. She can bear any thing, the worſt frown

or

or chaſtiſement from Chriſt, only ſhe cannot bear being excluded from his mercy and grace; ſhe would have ſome token of it, though never ſo mall: ſhe claims not a Benjamin's ſmeal, nor a child's portion, only let her have a dog's crumb. Lord, I take patiently the ſtripe from thee; give me but a crumb after it, and I'll go away ſatisfied. Surely the more humble any ſupplicant is at the throne of grace, he comes ſtill the better ſpeed, for the "Lord reſiſts the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

4. God's uſual method of diſpenſing his mercy and grace to ſinners, is, firſt to caſt them down before he raiſe them up; he firſt humbles and lays them low in a ſenſe of their unworthineſs and vileneſs, before he advances them to his favour. We muſt firſt ſee ourſelves to be as dogs, "leſs than the leaſt of all God's mercies," before we are fit to be dignified with "the privileges of children."

5. When unbelief draws diſmal concluſions from every thing, and tempts us to quit our grips and hopes, upon any dark diſpenſation, and to ſay with that wicked king, 2 Kings vi. 33. "This evil is of the Lord: Why ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?" Behold, faith is a valiant and importunate grace, it puts the beſt conſtructions upon all Chriſt's actions; it is ſharp-ſighted, to ſee and take hold of all advantages to ſtrengthen itſelf, and finds encouragement even in that which is diſcouraging. That which ſeemed to cut off this believing woman's hope, ſhe improves it as a ground of hope, and an argument in prayer, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat," &c. *q. d.* Even the worthleſs dogs belong to the family, and though they may not feaſt with children at the table, they may creep under it, and gather crumbs, thoſe off-fallings that would be ſwept to the door, this will not wrong the children. Let me ſtand in relation to Chriſt, though in the meaneſt ſtation, even that of his dog; I'll be thankful for it, or for any thing, if he do not turn me out of the houſe.

6. When our diſcouragements are greateſt, we ſhould learn, from this woman, never to give over the exerciſe of faith and prayer; but to look on all our diſappointments

diſappointments in the ſucceſs of prayer, as excitements to greater earneſtneſs in prayer. Faith will not ſet limits to the *Holy One*; though ſpeedy anſwers be not given to our prayers, it becomes us to wait on God's time, who is the beſt judge of the fitteſt ſeaſon: "He that believeth will not make haſte:" Why? he knows his extremity is God's fit opportunity.

7. A reſolute adhering to Chriſt by faith under trials, is moſt pleaſing and acceptable to him; as when we perſevere in the uſe of means when ſucceſs is ſmall, when we depend upon his promiſe, and look to his power; when under the darkeſt diſpenſations we watch over our hearts and ſteps, that they do not decline from his ways, as thoſe in Pſal. xliv. 17, 18. And, glory to him that gives us ſuch encouragement for this reſolute adherence to him, as the mercifulneſs of his nature, and his faithfulneſs, which aſſure us there is more good will in his heart than is viſible in his dealings; and that his providence will never give his word the lie. He gives ſecret ſtrength to his people to adhere to him, when he ſeems moſt oppoſite to them, as he did to this woman. He loves to bring about his peoples mercies by means improbable and contrary, to glorify his wiſdom. He delights to bring light out of darkneſs.

8. Great will the reward at laſt be of the believer's faith, humility and perſeverance in prayer; for, ſaith Chriſt at length, ver. 28. "O woman, great is thy faith; be it thee even as thou wilt."

MEDITATION X.

From 1 Cor. xi. 24. *This do in remembrance of me.*

O My ſoul, here is a ſolemn ordinance inſtituted for keeping up the remembrance of a crucified Jeſus; and behold it was appointed by himſelf, when he was juſt a going to do more for us than all the angels in heaven could have done, even to make atonement for our ſins

by his death and ſufferings; and he twice repeats his dying charge to us, ver. 24 and 25. "This do, this do ye." Men uſe to regard the command of their dying friends, and perform their wills religiouſly; and ſhall not I with pleaſure obey the will and command of a dying Redeemer, when the thing he requires is ſo eaſy and agreeable, to eat and drink at his table in remembrance of him? If I forget thee, O Friend of ſinners, let my right hand forget its cunning, &c.

Our loving Redeemer well knew the treachery of our memories, the worldlineſs of our hearts, and inconſtancy of our affections, that we would be ready to let his death and love ſlip out of our thoughts, and therefore he would have the ſigns of his ſufferings frequently preſented to our eyes. Alas! for the curſed ingratitude of my heart, that is ſo apt to forget him that remembered me when there was none to pity me: but, glory to him that takes ſuch pains to cure my forgetfulneſs, by ſetting forth Chriſt crucified ſo evidently before my eyes in the broken bread and poured out wine in the ſacrament. I look upon this ordinance as a viſible repreſentation and commemoration of my Saviour's death and ſufferings for his people, which he will have continued till he come again to judgment. It is like a marble pillar ſet up upon his grave, with an inſcription bearing account of his glorious achievements and mighty deeds, his glorious ſufferings, conflicts and victories for his people. Wherefore, as oft as he calls me, I will go thither, and put all the honour and reſpect I can upon my kind Benefactor: I will remember his love, proclaim his worth, and publiſh his praiſes. I'll hereby own myſelf before the world to be one of his diſciples, and a follower of the Lamb. I'll declare my abhorrence of ſin that pierced him, and my gratitude to the Lamb for the atoning ſacrifice he offered up for me upon the croſs. I'll triumph in this as the only ground of my hope. I'll put the crown on his head, and caſt all my crowns down at his feet, and cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, and has redeemed me from my ſins by his blood; worthy is he to receive

ceive all honour, power, glory and dominion for ever and ever."

Glory to my dear Saviour, that ſeeks no greater return for all his labour of love, than a thankful remembrance of it at his table. Oh, ſhall I grudge to give ſuch a ſmall return to him that ſuffered the pains of death and hell for me! Had he bid me ſacrifice my firſt-born, give all I have to the poor, or go in pilgrimage to the Holy Land to viſit his ſepulchre, or go to the top of mount Calvary where the croſs ſtood, as a token of thankfulneſs for his love, could I have refuſed it! But he puts me to no ſuch hard taſk. Lord, thou bids me not go to a bloody ſcaffold to remember thee, but to a well-covered table to do it. Thou bids me not go there to bleed or burn for thee, but to eat and drink; not the bread of affliction, or water of adverſity, but bread that ſtrengthens the heart, and wine that cheers the drooping ſpirit, bread and wine which thou haſt ſanctified and bleſſed for me. Surely, O dear Saviour, I owe my life to thee, nay, a thouſand lives, if I had them; but it is not my life, but my memory and thoughts, thou art calling for; it is not to die for thee, but to remember thee. Didſt thou drink a cup of wrath on the croſs for me, and will not I drink a cup of bleſſing at the table for thee, nay for myſelf, and for my eternal ſalvation!

Let me go then to this holy table, with faith, love, and thankfulneſs, to remember Chriſt and his dying love, as he commands me. And while I remember him, let me alſo receive and embrace him, as my bleeding High Prieſt, in the arms of my faith, and at the ſame time throw my guilty ſoul into his wounded arms, for ſaving me from wrath. Let me go and remember the woundings and piercings of my Redeemer, with a pierced and wounded heart for theſe curſed ſins which nailed and killed the Prince of Life. Let me henceforth be the death of ſin, which was the death of my dear Saviour. O, ſhall I ſuffer ſin to live any longer in me, that would not ſuffer my Redeemer to live in the world!

But let me conſider my High Prieſt before-hand, and what of his ſufferings I ſhould remember at his table. I'll remember how the glorious Heir of all things denuded himſelf of his riches and glory, how he left his throne of majeſty to lodge in a virgin's womb; yea, to be born among beaſts, and cradled in a manger, for ſuch a worm as me. I'll remember how he was attacked by the devil, contradicted by ſinners, and reproached by the world for my ſake. I'll remember how ſorrowful his ſoul was in the garden, when the bitter cup was put in his hand; and how he ſwate, how he prayed, how he fell to the ground, till he was quite overwhelmed with wrath, and covered with his own blood for my ſake! I'll remember how he was ſold for a ſmall price, and baſely betrayed by Judas; how he was taken by the ſoldiers, tied as a malefactor with cords, denied by Peter, forſaken by all his diſciples, and left alone among his cruel inſulting enemies. I'll remember how he was blindfolded, mocked, ſpit upon, buffeted and affronted by ruffians a whole night, and patiently ſuffered all for my ſake! I'll remember how his lovely countenance was diſfigured with blows, and the plucking the hair off his cheeks; and how the ſweeteſt face ever the ſun ſaw, was all beſmeared with blood and ſpitting for my ſake. I'll remember how he that clothes the lillies of the field, was himſelf ſtript naked, bound to a pillar and cruelly ſcourged, till the pavement of Pilate's judgment-hall was all bedewed with his precious blood. I'll remember how the crown of thorns was platted with the ſharp points turned inward, put upon his head, and driven into his temples with a reed, till they pierced his ſkull in many places, and a new ſhower of blood run down his bleſſed neck. I'll remember how the heavy croſs-tree was laid upon his ſcourged and bleeding ſhoulders, and he made to carry it through the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, forth of the gates, and up mount Calvary, to the place of execution, until his ſtrength was ſpent, and he foundered under the burden.—I'll remember how the croſs tree was laid down, and my Saviour ſtript naked and ſtretched out upon it as a rack; and how he was faſtened to

it

it with four big iron nails through his hands and feet, and the croſs lifted up and let fall into a deep hole digged for the foot of it, to the violent rending and widening of his ſacred wounds by which he hang, until his blood ſtreamed forth at them, and he expired amidſt the moſt exquiſite tortures.

I'll remember alſo the ſufferings of his ſoul at that time, when the Lord ran upon him as a giant, and made his ſoul the butt of his envenomed arrows, the poiſon whereof drank up his ſpirits, until his ſtrength was dried up like a potsherd.—I'll remember how his ſoul was troubled and non-pluſſed at the diſtant proſpect of this cup; and how ſore amazed he was ſoon after, when it was put into his hand.—I'll remember how the taſting of it caſt him into a bloody ſweat and agony, which dyed his garments red, and bedewed the ground where he lay.—I'll remember how he was broken with breach upon breach, till all the ſea-billows of divine vengeance went over him, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah was made to roar under the ſtrokes and bruiſes of the flaming ſword, Pſal. xxii. 1.—I'll remember the dreadful hidings of God's face he lay under, until he was made to cry, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?"—I'll remember the inexorableneſs of divine juſtice, that would not ſpare him one ſtripe, bate him one farthing of the debt, nor one drop of the cup; ſo that he drank till he cried, "It is finiſhed," and gave up the ghoſt. Glory to him for his love in finiſhing the work.

MEDITATION

MEDITATION XI.

From Phil. i. 23. *For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two—*

AS the apoſtle was in a ſtrait whether to chuſe to die or live, ſo I am in a ſtrait whether to go to the Lord's table, or to ſtay back. Now, thou calleſt me, Lord, to celebrate the memorials of thy death, yea, to feaſt with thee at thy holy table, and I know not what to chuſe; I am in a ſtrait betwixt two. My heart is ſo unholy, and my unworthineſs ſo great, I tremble to go forward to feaſt with a God ſo holy, and whoſe purity is infinite; and yet my wants are ſo many, and my neceſſities ſo great, that my caſe is hopeleſs if I ſtay back! Lord, I can go to none elſe in all the world, to ſupply my needs, but to thyſelf alone. But oh, when I think of going forward, my guilt ſtops my mouth, and fills me with bluſhing. Lord, if the holy angels, thoſe pure and unſpotted ſeraphims, who burn in zeal for thy ſervice, muſt even cover their faces before thee; how ſhall I venture into thy preſence, I whoſe zeal is ſo languiſhing, whoſe love is ſo cold, whoſe mind is ſo earthly, and prayers ſo dull? Shall I approach ſo near a holy God in ſuch a caſe? But what then ſhall I do! Shall I join with thoſe worldlings who were bidden to the feaſt of the great King, refuſe, and make my excuſe? Then I fear the King will be angry, declare me unworthy to taſte of his ſupper, yea, ſwear in his wrath that I ſhall never enter into his reſt.

Lord, I abhor myſelf for my unworthineſs and vileneſs, my guilt and pollution; but where ſhall I go to get help and remedy for it, but unto thee alone? Haſt thou not bidden me come, though my ſins be red as crimſon? Have not many ſuch come to thee, and found relief and help? Surely, O Lord, thy goodneſs is greater than my ſinfulneſs, and thy mercy ſurpaſſeth

my

my miſery; for though my ſins reach even to the clouds, yet thy mercy is above the heavens. O merciful Father, extend thy free, boundleſs mercy to a miſerable, helpleſs ſinner: Surely miſery is the proper object of mercy. Holy God, if thou help me not for the ſake of my miſeries which I have deſerved, yet help me for the ſake of thy mercies which thou haſt promiſed in Chriſt thy dear Son. Wherefore I plead for Chriſt's ſake, that thou wilt hear the cry of my miſeries, and not the cry of my ſins. O doth not his precious blood cry louder for pardon, than my ſins for puniſhment? Lord, hear the cry of that blood, and let it not be as water ſpilt upon the ground. For the ſake of that prevalent blood, pity, pardon, and accept a poor unworthy creature, that deſires to obey thy call, and prepare his heart to ſeek thee, though he be not cleanſed according to the purification of the ſanctury.

O Lord, though I may be aſhamed to come to thee, my needs are ſo preſſing and pinching, that I cannot ſtay away. "To whom ſhall I go but unto thee, for thou haſt the words of eternal life?" The whole creation cannot ſupply my wants. Thou only art my Sun, from whoſe beams I muſt receive ſaving light: Thou art my Head, from whom I muſt get ſpiritual life: Thou art my Root, from which I muſt derive ſap and growth: Thou art the Fountain from which I muſt draw living water: Thou art the Treaſurer from which I muſt obtain the riches of grace. So that without thee I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing.——To thee then I muſt go for all my ſupplies, and out of thy fulneſs receive grace for grace.——Lord, thou haſt enough to ſupply many worlds of needy ſouls; for the ſun is not ſo full of light, nor the ſea ſo full of water, as thou art full of grace and mercy to needy creatures: and as thou art full, ſo, I am aſſured, thou art free, and willing to communicate thy fulneſs.—In ſpite then of all objections and difficulties, forward to thee I will go, and caſt myſelf down at thy feet; *If I periſh, I periſh.* Oh! did ever any periſh at mercy's door?

Lord, I have heard of thy mercy to the very chief of ſinners, and cannot this mercy reach the like of me? Surely

Surely the viler ſinner I am, thou haſt the fairer opportunity to ſhew the riches of thy mercy, the freeneſs of thy love, and the efficacy of thy blood; and if I be allowed to ſhare therein, the ſweeter and louder will the eternal hallelujahs be, that will be ſung to the Lamb of God on my account. O that he would glorify his mercy, his love and blood, in my relief. O where ſhall a poor heavy laden ſinner go, but to him than can free him of his burden? Where ſhall I go with a multitude of ſins and miſeries, but to thee who haſt a multitude of tender mercies? Where ſhall I go with my deep and heinous guilt, but to thee who haſt a deep fountain to waſh it away? Behold one depth called to another, the depth of my miſery to the depth of thy mercy? My wound is great, but thy balm is excellent! My ſore is broad, but thy plaiſter is anſwerable! "O Lord, be merciful to me, heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee."

Lord, is not the goſpel-feaſt I am invited to, a feaſt of charity, to which thou calleſt not the rich, but the poor, maimed, halt, and blind, who cannot make any return for thy bounty? And may not ſuch a miſerable object as I am, take encouragement from ſuch a free extenſive invitation? Luke xiv. 21.——My bleſt Redeemer, while he was on earth, did not diſdain to eat with publicans and ſinners, nor to dine with Simon a leper. And though he is now exalted in the higheſt heavens, yet he ſtill retains the bowels of a man, and all the pity and charity to periſhing ſinners he had, while here in his ſtate of humiliation. Wherefore, ſenſible of my unworthineſs, loathing myſelf for my vileneſs, and truſting to my Saviour's compaſſion to the miſerable, I deſire to go forward to his holy table: O that he would direct and ſtrengthen me to go about ſuch a weighty work! Let not that ordinance, which God hath inſtituted for a bleſſing, be made a curſe to me, through my unworthy partaking. Lord, rebuke all unſeaſonable thoughts and wanderings that would mar the duty; excite and actuate in me every proper grace, and enable me to manage ſo, that I may not diſhonour, but glorify thee; I may not increaſe my guilt, but augment

ment my grace: I may not bring more hardneſs, but ſoftneſs into my heart. Lord, deſcend thou into my heart, by the influences of thy Spirit, that I may aſcend unto thee by the actings of grace; and when the King ſits at his table, let my ſpikenard ſend forth the ſmell thereof. Lord, I look to thee for ſtrength, conduct, and through-bearing, in every ſtrait. I truſt not in my preparation, but in thy free mercy for acceptance; I truſt not in my faith, but in thy faithfulneſs, who haſt promiſed to give power to the faint; I truſt not in my repentance, but in thy free pardoning mercy; I truſt not in my doings, but in Chriſt's doings. O take away my filthy garments, and clothe me with the beſt robe,—"THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.—I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only.—Awake, O north wind, and come thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices may flow out.—If thy preſence go not with me, carry me not up hence.

The Lord made a breach on the Iſraelites, for not ſeeking him after the due order, 1 Chron. xv. 13. He ſmote 50,000 of the Bethſhemites for an irreverent look into the ark, which typified Chriſt, and what cauſe have I then to fear a ſtroke, ſhould I raſhly touch the ſymbols of his body and blood! Seeing this ordinance is intended for doing honour to the King of Zion, O ſave me from doing indignity to him, by betraying him with a kiſs, or by throwing his picture, or great ſeal, into a puddle. May I ſo ſeparate for this feaſt, that the bleſſed Maſter of it may ſee I am watchful of his eye, tender of his honour, and fearful of his anger. Lord, awake my heart, ſtir up my graces, and prepare me for a meeting with my Saviour, and let not my ſoul, whoſe only hope is to be ſaved by Chriſt's blood, be ſent away from his table with the guilt, inſtead of the benefit, of that blood upon it.

MEDITATION XII.

From Philip. iv. 10. *But my God ſhall ſupply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus.*

HEAVENLY Father, out of thy rich bounty thou waſt pleaſed once to lay up a great ſtock for me in my progenitors hands, but they very ſoon ſquandered it all away, ſo that I am becc me extremely poor and needy. Oh! what can I do in this indigent condition, but come back to thee for pity and new ſupplies? For ever bleſſed be thy name, for the reviving news thou haſt publiſhed in the goſpel; that thou haſt now laid up a new ſtock for bankrupt ſinners in the hands of a Surety that cannot fail, and haſt erected a throne of grace for ſuch as I am to come to in time of need, where Chriſt Jeſus my Surety ſits, as commiſſioned by thee, with glorious riches to ſupply my wants. Many are the needs which thou thinks fit to leave upon me, that I might have the more errands unto his throne, and that thou mayſt the oftner hear my voice. O pour out upon me a ſpirit of grace and ſupplication, and cauſe me delight in approaching to thee, and pouring out my wants before thee.

Behold, Lord, a needy creature, an object of pity, approaching to a liberal Saviour, whoſe fulneſs is infinite! O how ſuitable is it to my wants, which are great and innumerable! I am ſtarving and have no bread; I am naked and have no cloathing; I am wounded and have no cure; I am in debt and have no money; I am polluted and have no fountain; I am burdened and have no reſt; I have deſtroyed myſelf and can find no help in myſelf. But yet there is help for me elſewhere; I have heard of the mercy of the King of Iſrael, and of the remedy he hath provided for thoſe who are helpleſs, loſt and miſerable. Wherefore, though I be poor I will not deſpair, for thou art the

the Lord of the whole world, and haſt opened thy treaſures to the needy: Though I be polluted, I will not deſpond, for thou haſt the fountain of ſalvation: Tho' I be naked, I will not with Adam run from thee, and hide myſelf; nay, I will run to thee to cover me with the wool and fleece of the Lamb of God, even the ſpotleſs righteouſneſs and innocence of my Saviour: Tho' I be hungry and ſtarving, I will take encouragement from the glad tidings thou haſt proclaimed in the goſpel of a rich feaſt for the poor and needy. Lord, I come to thee as the hungry to be fed, as the naked to be cloathed, as the wounded to be healed, as the cold ſtarving creature to the fire, as the unclean to be waſhed in the Fountain that is opened not to the houſe of David only, but even to the pooreſt inhabitant in Jeruſalem. Glory to God, that it is ſo free and open to the poor and needy.

Lord, I come not to thy table, becauſe I am worthy; but becauſe thou art rich in mercy, and doſt promiſe that "the needy ſhall not be forgotten, and the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh. And that when the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, thou the Lord wilt hear them, and open rivers in the wilderneſs, and fountains in midſt of the vallies." O come, do as thou haſt ſaid, pity a poor, needy periſhing creature, and fill my narrow veſſel out of the ocean of thy mercy, where it will not be miſſed. Come to the feaſt of thine own appointment, and diſplay thy fulneſs and liberality. Caſt open the doors of thy treaſures, and allow me acceſs to Chriſt's unſearchable riches. Thy word, Lord, doth aſſure me, that in all ages thou haſt beſtowed theſe riches upon the poor and needy, without money, and without price. And this doth warrant me to plead with thee to come to thy houſe, where many needy beggars are gathered, and ſcatter thy bounty among them, and admit me to gather with them. O let not ſuch a miſerable object go from thy door without an alms, without a crumb of the childrens bread, ſeeing there is bread enough in thy houſe, and to ſpare. O let none return aſhamed from the Fountain who come

e-pecting water. Thou haſt promiſed to pour water upon the thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground. Oh, is there any more dry, more poor, more needy than I am! Lord, make me as thirſty as I am dry, as humble as I am poor, and as ſenſible as I am needy. Alas, that I have ſo little ſenſe of my wants! Oh, deal not with me according to my ſenſe of need, which is ſmall, but deal with me according to my real need, and thy royal bounty, which is exceeding great.

O that I were poor and needy in my own eyes, and truly ſenſible of my own wants: that I am drowned in debt to the law and juſtice of God, owe many thouſands, and have not one farthing to pay: That I am deſtitute of every thing that is good, can do nothing to pleaſe God, and am unworthy of the leaſt of his mercies. O that I were made willing to quit all confidence in my own righteouſneſs, duties, frames, or attainments; and well content to go entirely out of myſelf to Chriſt, for righteouſneſs to juſtify me, and for his Spirit and grace to renew and ſanctify my nature.

Lord, I am poor, but I ſee God has treaſured up unſearchable riches, and infinite fulneſs in Jeſus Chriſt, to anſwer all my needs: I am naked, but I ſee in Chriſt a robe of righteouſneſs, that is ſufficient to cover me, and a whole elect world: I am a ſtarving creature, but in Chriſt there is the bread of life, and the waters of life for my ſoul: I am fooliſh and ignorant, but Chriſt hath infinite wiſdom to teach me and guide me: I am laden with guilt, but Chriſt's ſacrifice is ſufficient to atone for it: I have ſtrong luſts and corruptions, but Chriſt hath a kingly power to ſubdue them: I am under much darkneſs, but Chriſt is "the light of the world:" I am under fears and diſcouragements, but Chriſt is "the Conſolation of Iſrael:" I am wounded and ſick, but Chriſt, my Phyſician, hath excellent balm for me: I am under a burden of debt, but Chriſt, my Surety, is rich, and fully able to pay it: I am in priſon, and under bonds, but Chriſt opens priſon doors, and looſes them that are bound: —I am fatherleſs, by Adam's fall, but Chriſt is the everlaſting Father, "in whom the fatherleſs find mercy:"

I have

I have many enemies to purſue and accuſe me; as law, juſtice, ſatan, and conſcience: but Chriſt my Advocate can anſwer them all:—Therefore I flee to him for refuge, I cloſe with him in all his offices, and put my whole confidence in him.

It gives great encouragement to my poor needy ſoul, that I have a Saviour ſo full of goodneſs and pity to look to, a mighty agent in heaven to plead my cauſe, and to preſent my bills, petitions, and ſupplications, to the Father. I put all my requeſts and concerns in his hand, and commit them to his care and management; he knows the fitteſt time to preſent them, and to ſend me an anſwer. In the ſacrament I ſwear allegiance to thee, as my Sovereign Lord and King, over thy broken body and ſhed blood; I engage to be a true and faithful ſoldier in thy army, and to take the field againſt thy enemies. Many pieces of furniture do I need for this warfare; I need the girdle of ſincerity, the ſhield of faith, the helmet of hope, the ſword of the Spirit, the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs, and to have my feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace. But glory to thy name, my Redeemer and Captain of ſalvation hath provided a noble armoury and ſtore-houſe to anſwer all theſe my neceſſities and wants. Lord, ſupply all my needs out of thy infinite fulneſs, and furniſh me with every thing requiſite and neceſſary for the work and warfare thou calleſt me unto. Oh, my enemies are lively, and they are ſtrong: But I look to my glorious Captain, to gird me with ſtrength for the battle, and to teach my hands to war.

MEDITATION

MEDITATION XIII.

From Epheſ. iii. 19. *And to know the love of* CHRIST, *which paſſeth knowledge.*

WHERE ſhall I begin my thoughts upon the ſubject of the love of Chriſt to men? And when begun, how ſhall I make an end? It hath a breadth and length, a depth and heighth, that paſſeth knowledge. If the apoſtle Paul, that had the brighteſt diſcoveries of this love, owned this, much more may I. I may ſooner find out the height of heaven, the breadth of the earth, or the depth of the ſea, than meaſure Chriſt's love. It is an unfathomable ocean that hath neither bank nor bottom. O whither did his love carry him! From the height of glory to the depth of miſery. How low and deep was our fall, that nothing could recover and raiſe us up, but the low abaſement of the Son of God, the King of glory! How low was the ſtep he made to help us up; even to put on our nature, and ſuffer himſelf to be pierced for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities! Bleſſed Lord, thou tookeſt not on thee the nature of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham; theſe are faſt bound up from thee with chains of darkneſs, whilſt thou draweſt us to thee with cords of love! How diſtinguiſhing was thy love to man, that brought thee from heaven to earth, from the throne to the manger, from the manger to the wilderneſs, from the wilderneſs to the garden, from the garden to the judgment-hall, from the judgment-hall to the croſs, from the croſs to the grave; yea, from the glory of heaven, to the very torments of hell, and all for creatures that were black and ugly as hell! How wonderful is the ſight thou calleſt me to ſee at the Lord's table! even to ſee him ſuffering for ſin, that never committed ſin! To ſee "him made ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we," who knew

know no righteouſneſs, " might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him !" An amazing ſight indeed !

" Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him !" O what is he, that thou ſhouldſt magnify and ſet thy heart on him ! And what am I, the worſt of men, and vileſt of ſinners, that thou ſhouldſt ſtoop ſo low to exalt me ! That thou ſhould endure the poverty of this world, that I might enjoy the riches of heaven ! Be content to live in the form of a ſervant, that I might have the adoption of ſons ! Be willing to bow thyſelf unto death, to raiſe me to eternal life ! Content to be numbered among tranſgreſſors, that I might have a room among the bleſſed ! To be crowned with thorns, that I might be crowned with glory ! To be condemned before men, that I might be juſtified before God ! To drink the bitter cup of wrath, that I might drink the pure river of life ! To cry out in ſorrow upon the croſs, that I might triumph with joy upon the throne ! To ſtand before the mouth of hell furnace, to keep its flames from breaking out on me ! O Lord Jeſus, thy love hath overflown all banks, and thy compaſſion knew no bounds ! Can I think on it, and my heart not burn ? Can I ſpeak of it, and not be overcome, ſo as to ſeek, with Joſeph, a ſecret place to weep in !

O love that paſſeth knowledge ? How ſhall I think of it, and not ſtand amazed ! That the General ſhould die for the ſoldier, the Phyſician for the patient ? That the righteous Judge of heaven ſhould come to the bar, put himſelf in the malefactor's clothes, and be condemned for him ! That the bleſſed Son of God ſhould interpoſe his innocent breaſt to receive the mortal ſtroke for us ! That God all-ſufficient ſhould be expoſed to hunger and thirſt, to grief and wearineſs, and the vileſt reproaches and indignities, for worms like us ! Behold the Creator of the world wounded, mangled, and killed, by ungrateful creatures whom he came to ſave ! Behold his bowels yearning towards them who raked in them with their bloody hands ! Behold his heart burning with affection toward them that cruelly pierced it ! Surely a believing view of this love of Chriſt is ſufficient to mollify a heart more cold and frozen than ice

ice itſelf! O love unfathomable! Who can meaſure its dimenſions! It hath a height without a top, a depth without a bottom, breadth without a ſide, a length without end! Aſtoniſhing love! that my exalted Lord ſhould ſtoop ſo low as to become a man; nay, a poor man, a man of ſorrows, a deſerted man, a dying man, and alſo a dead man, for ſuch a wretch as me! Nay, more, that he ſhould ſtoop to be made a curſe, and underly a dreadful load of wrath upon his innocent ſoul, infinitely more heavy than what is laid upon any damned ſoul in hell!

O what a ſea of wrath did my loving Jeſus ſwim through, to ſave me from periſhing! Behold how that raging ſea wrought and was tempeſtuous, roared moſt terribly, and threatened to ſwallow me up with the reſt of the elect world; till once my Redeemer ſtepped in, and undertook to be the Sacrifice for calming the ſea! Take me up, (ſaid he, like Jonah) and throw me into the ſea, and ye ſhall be all ſafe. In this red-ſea our bleſſed Jonah was content to ſwim for thirty-three years, without ſeeking deliverance, till once the ſea was perfectly calm, and every elect ſoul out of danger. Marvellous loving-kindneſs! O that I could, with a ſuitable frame of heart, both remember and admire redeeming love and redeeming blood, when I go to ſit down at my Redeemer's table. O that I may there get faith's ſight of the various inſtances of his love, "that paſſeth knowledge." Let me there view Chriſt in the womb, and in the manger; in his weary ſteps and hungry bowels; in his proſtrations in the garden, and clotted drops of bloody ſweat. Let me view his head with a crown of thorns, and his face beſmeared with the ſoldiers ſpitt. Let me view him in his march to Calvary, and his elevation upon a painful croſs, with his head bowed down, and his ſide ſtreaming blood! O unparalleled love! It had been wonderful love to have ſent one of the lofty ſeraphims to ſuffer for us; but to give him whom all the ſeraphims ſerve and adore, is "love that paſſeth knowledge!" Let me view the Scripture deſignations and titles of "him that loved us, and gave himſelf for us," that he might waſh us in his blood.

He

He is our " Immanuel, the Wonderful, the Counſellor, the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of peace, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Lord of glory, the Roſe of Sharon, the Plant of renown, the Brightneſs of his Father's glory, the expreſs Image of his Perſon, the bright and Morning Star, the Sun of righteouſneſs, the Light of the world, the Head of the Church, the Beginning and Firſt-born from the dead, the appointed Heir of all things." This is " he that loved us, and gave himſelf" to die for the redemption of a crew of rebels, grace-abuſing and goſpel-ſlighting ſinners! O what am I that thou ſhouldſt ſpare, yea, ranſom and feaſt me in ſuch a manner! Long ago mightſt thou have ſhaken off the hand of thy providence ſuch a viper as I am into fire unquenchable; and there made me to know, to ſad experience, what it is to abuſe free grace, by the loſs of eternal glory. But, inſtead of that, thou haſt pitied me, loved me, become my Surety, to appeaſe juſtice for my heinous ſins by thy blood, when no other ſacrifice would do. Lord, I welcome thy love-feaſt; I lay my hand on the head of the Sacrifice, and reſt upon it; " I believe, Lord, help my unbelief." O that I may henceforth live under the continual ſenſe of my infinite obligations to my glorious Surety, that could make " his ſoul an offering for my ſin." O what return ſhall I give him for all his ſoul-travail and agonies for me? O that I could ſpend my whole life, and each day of it, in magnifying his love, and living to his praiſe. Now, " bleſſed be his glorious name for ever and ever; let the whole earth be filled with his glory." Amen and Amen.

MEDITATION XIV.

From Luke xxii. 44. *And being in an agony, his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood.*

O MY ſoul, this text affords thee great ſubject of thoughts, when thou goeſt to remember thy dear Saviour at his table. Here I ſee him in a bloody agony! And, firſt, let me obſerve the place where his agony began, the garden of Gethſemane, which lay in the valley of Jehoſhaphat, on the eaſt ſide of Jeruſalem, at the foot of the mount of Olives. Now, it was in the valley of Jehoſhaphat that God did plead with the nations in Chriſt their Surety, Joel iii. 2. The word *Gethſemane* ſignifies a mill or preſs for olives, as being probably the place where they preſſed the olives that grew on the mount, and there ſqueezed the oil out of them. In this place, it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe Chriſt, our true Olive, that ſo out of his fulneſs the freſh oil of his merit and grace might flow abundantly to needy ſouls. Never was there ſuch an olive preſſed there before, ſince the firſt planting of that mount! Never was there ſuch precious oil ſeen as Jeſus' blood! O that I may partake of the root and fatneſs of that good Olive which was preſſed here, and of that oil, which will make my grace to grow, and my face to ſhine!

As it was in a garden that man's ſin and miſery firſt began, ſo it was in a garden that our bleſſed Surety began his laſt expiatory ſufferings for ſin, which caſt him into a fearful agony. As the garden of Eden produced man's miſery; ſo the garden of Gethſemane provided a remedy. O that when I walk and retire myſelf in a garden, I may have grace to think ſeriouſly, and with ſuitable affections, upon the ſins of men, and the ſufferings of my Saviour for them! and, at the ſame time, to ſend up my ejaculations to God for an intereſt in his agony and atonement, and for the comfortable intima-

tion

tion thereof to my soul. When my dear Redeemer was in his agony of soul, I read of his offering up "prayers and supplications (to God) with strong crying and tears," Heb. v. 7. And have I no prayers nor tears to offer up to God at the remembrance of his agony? especially when I consider how much my sins contributed to throw him into it. O how strong and bitter were my Surety's cries at this time, when God bruised his soul, and poured down a flood of his wrath upon him! He cried, till he was spent with crying; he grew hoarse with it, and his throat so dried, that he could cry no more, Psal. lxix. 3. Now was his soul in travail, and great cause had he for his strong crying and tears! He was sicke under all the pains of his body, and under his sufferings from men; all that time he is dumb, "as a sheep before her shearers:" But, behold, when fierce wrath from God alighted on his soul, he cried vehemently; and he prayed most earnestly and importunately for support and through-bearing under this terrible storm. O that, from my Saviour's example, I may learn, when under soul-trouble and inward distress, to make my prayers to God more earnest and fervent, and to persevere without fainting; which I have great encouragement to do from this, that my Saviour's fervent prayers and tears have made way for mine.

I observe also, in this passage, that the agony of Christ's soul increased so much, that it produced a sweat of blood over his body; yea, great drops or clods of blood, which, by his violent agony, burst through his very clothes, and watered the ground where he lay. O what trouble and anguish, pangs and sorrows, desertions and struglings, must his soul have endured at this time, under the burden of God's wrath for his peoples sins, which put his sacred body and blood into such a dreadful commotion and ferment! O what a prodigious and preternatural sweat was this! Never was the like heard of since the world began! According to the course of nature, Christ's lying in the open air, in a cold night, upon the cold ground, with the greatness of his consternation, should have drawn all his blood

inward from the external parts of his body; but Chriſt's ſweating and bleeding was altogether preternatural. He ſwate without external heat, he bled without external wound. The fire of divine wrath, now kindled in his ſoul, was ſo very hot and raging, that it made the blood about his heart to boil, and burſt through both fleſh and garments. He had received, at this time, no wound nor external violence from any hand; no Judas, no ſoldier, no tormentor, had yet attacked him; no ſpear, no nail, no thorn or ſcourge, had yet touched his ſacred body, and yet he bleeds moſt plentifully! O but the ſword of juſtice had reached him, and made a deep wound and wide gaſh in his ſoul; at which breach a ſea of wrath brake in with ſuch violence, that it overwhelmed him; made him fall firſt on his knees, and then flat on the ground, where he lay agonizing and crying, till all the waves and billows of divine vengeance went over him. Oh! what a dreadful preſſure was my Saviour's ſoul under at this time! What ſqueezing anguiſh had he about his heart, that made his body to ſtruggle and ſweat in ſuch a manner, ſo that every pore of his body became a bleeding wound! O how awfully ſhould I be affected with this tragical ſight! How thankfully ſhould I remember my Redeemer's love, when he calls me to do it at his holy table!

In my Saviour's agony I may ſee, as in a glaſs, the malignant evil and curſed nature of ſin, that no leſs could atone for it than the ſoul-travail and agony of the dear Son of God! Can I ever make light of ſin, when I view the great drops of blood ſtanding above his garments, while he lay grovelling on the earth in the anguiſh of his ſoul! Shall I not henceforth abhor ſin, and ſtand in awe of offending a juſt and holy God, ſeeing it is ſuch a fearful thing to fall into his hands: "If ſuch things were done in the green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?" Was the cup of wrath ſo terrible to the innocent human nature of Chriſt, when preſented to him, that he ſhrinked and cried out? O what will it be to guilty ſinners! Here I may ſee how coſtly the redemption of ſouls is; ere this could be compaſſed,

God

God muſt become man, Eternity muſt ſuffer death, the Lord of angels muſt weep in a cradle, the Creator of the world muſt hang like a ſlave! He muſt lie in a manger at Bethlehem, cry in an agony at Gethſemane, die on a croſs at Calvary! Unſpotted Righteouſneſs muſt be made ſin, and unblemiſhed Bleſſedneſs muſt be made a curſe! O did Chriſt value ſouls at ſo high a rate! and ſhall men be ſo fooliſh as throw them away for a thing of nought?

Here I may ſee the great difficulty of making peace with God, when once his law is broken; no leſs could do it than the blood and ſoul-agony of the Son of God; even an infinite Ranſom muſt be paid, ere God would be reconciled to man. O how much am I beholden to Chriſt that undertook the reconciliation, that prevented my ruin by taking the cup out of my hand! O the cup he drank for me was mingled with wrath and curſes, a cup full of vengeance, preſſed down, heaped up, ſhaken together, and running over; a cup, which, if men or angels had but taſted, they had reeled, ſtaggered, and fallen headlong into hell: Yet, ſaid Chriſt, ere any of my elect ones drink it, I will drink it for them; reach it hither to me bitter as it is. Oh how ready was Chriſt to engage for men! and how willing was he to perform! How ready, full and free, was the fountain of his blood to waſh the defiled! Behold how freely it iſſued forth before a wound was opened; all his veins and pores poured it forth, without waiting for the tormentors. Lord, make me as willing and ready to apply it. Did Chriſt wreſtle in an agony to obtain the redemption of loſt ſinners; and ſhall not I wreſtle as in an agony to get an intereſt in this redemption, and the evidence thereof cleared up to my ſoul! O for faith and fervency in prayer, that I may wreſtle without ceaſing for the aſſurance of his love, that I may go with joy to his table

MEDITATION

MEDITATION II.

From Iſa. liii. 7. *He opened not his mouth; he is brought as a Lamb to the ſlaughter.*

IT becomes me to read and conſider theſe words with great attention, ſeeing they were the occaſion of the Ethiopian eunuch's converſion; for it was while he read and thought on theſe words, that God ſent Philip to join him, Acts viii. 29. O that God would, in like manner, ſend his holy Spirit to join me while I am meditating on them.

1. I obſerve that Chriſt is the great Sacrifice provided by God to make atonement for our ſins: He is the great Antitype and ſubſtance of all the lambs and beaſts that were offered up in ſacrifice under the law, and therefore he is often in the New Teſtament called "the Lamb, the Lamb of God, and the Lamb ſlain." The Spirit of God ſeems to have a peculiar delight in dwelling upon this type of *the Lamb*, more than in any other of the Old-Teſtament types; and ſhould not I delight in it too, and often with pleaſure make mention of *the Lamb, the worthy Lamb*, that will be the object of the praiſes of ſaints and angels through all eternity?

2. Chriſt is repreſented by a lamb, to point out the innocence of his perſon, the meekneſs of his nature, the uſefulneſs of his benefits, and his patience under ſufferings. How patient is the lamb under injuries! it is ſilent both before the ſhearer and the butcher; it parts with its fleece in ſhearing time, and with its life in ſlaughter time, without any noiſe or reſiſtance. Dogs and ſwine howl and cry, when violence is offered to them, but the lamb is quite ſilent. So Chriſt, the Lamb of God, opened not his mouth, under the greateſt revilings, mockings, buffetings, ſpittings, piercings, and the moſt cruel death, which he ſuffered from men, 1 Pet. ii. 23. and hence it is ſaid in the text, when he was led

to,

to the ſlaughter, "he opened not his mouth:" He opened not his mouth, unleſs it was to bleſs, teach, or pray for, thoſe who injured him; yea, he not only did pray, but alſo plead an excuſe for them, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And, after his reſurrection, how ready was this meek Lamb to forgive all that wronged him! When giving orders to preach remiſſion of ſins to a loſt world, he bids *begin at* Jeruſalem, Luke xxiv. 46. where they mocked and pierced him, becauſe there they had greateſt need of his blood to waſh them from guilt. How meekly did our bleſſed Lamb carry to Peter, when he denied him in his own hearing? He did not turn and frown upon Peter, as he well deſerved, though he might have frowned him into hell; it is ſaid only, "He turned and looked on Peter," Luke xxii. 61. not with an angry look, but with an affectionate melting look, which recovered him to a penitent frame: Neither did he afterwards upbraid him with his carriage. O meek Lamb of God! can I remember thee at thy table, without being filled with remorſe and grief for my impatience under injuries, and the proneneſs of my heart to reſent them? Shall I not be aſhamed of my unchriſtian temper, when I ſee my meek and loving Jeſus, willing to be the ſport and deriſion of men and devils, that he might be the author of ſalvation to periſhing ſouls? O, how aſtoniſhing is it to ſee the Creator affronted by the creature, the Potter by his clay, the King of glory by worms of the earth, and yet hold his peace! Now, is the Head ſo meek and patient, and ſhould not the members be ſo too! O how unſeemly is it, to ſee a company of fierce lions following a meek Lamb! O that I could learn more of him that is meek and lowly in heart.

3. Here I ſee the greateſt inſtance of divine love that ever the world ſaw. Behold an offended God willing to ſpare wretched criminals, and take ſatisfaction from a Surety in their room; and he himſelf finds out the Lamb to be the ſacrifice, even his eternal Son, who willingly undertook to aſſume a body for that end. How aſtoniſhing are the Lamb's words, Heb. x. 5. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared

prepared me;" as if he had ſaid, "Father, ſince all the legal ſacrifices are inſufficient to ſatisfy thy juſtice, atone for ſin, and ranſom precious ſouls; even take the body thou haſt prepared for me, let that be the ſacrifice to juſtice; it is more valuable than any other, being the tabernacle of my divine Perſon; it will bring glory to thy offended juſtice, and ſatisfy it to the full. I yield myſelf willingly to be the priſoner of juſtice, and go quietly as a lamb to the ſlaughter; not dragged to it, as an ox or a bullock, but meekly and pleaſantly, like a lamb." When, according to this agreement, juſtice required the Lamb to be ſacrificed, O how patient and ſilent was he under all the accuſations led againſt him, though he was wholly innocent; he would ſay nothing in his own defence; at which Pilate (not knowing the cauſe of his ſilence) marvelled greatly, having never ſeen the like before. But our Lamb conſidered that he ſtood not only at Pilate's bar, but alſo at the bar of God's juſtice as our Surety, bearing our guilt; and though man had nothing to lay to his charge, yet he knew what divine juſtice had to charge upon him, and therefore he is ſilent and anſwers nothing, that he might not hinder our redemption, nor ſtop the payment of our debt. When juſtice charged him with our ſins, our *unbelief*, *pride*, *covetouſneſs*, &c. he might have ſaid, "O Father, theſe tranſgreſſions are not mine, I never offended thee;" but he will do nothing to reſcue himſelf. Therefore, when the fearful charge of the whole ſins of an elect world was exhibited againſt him, and the ſword of juſtice drawn, ready to ſtrike, he opened not his mouth, but takes with the charge, as if he had been guilty of all.* Glory to the ſilent Lamb for ever, that would not hinder our releaſe from puniſhment, but meekly took the ſtroke for us.

4. Behold this meek Lamb, before he was brought to the ſlaughter, led up and down from place to place; from the garden to the high-prieſt, from the high-prieſt to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod back to Pilate, from Pilate to Calvary. Behold him mocked, abuſed, and diſgraced by them, buffeted and ſpite upon, crowned, ſcourged, and pierced, and yet never reſiſts nor

not complains. He willingly "gave his back to the ſmiters, and his cheeks to them that pluckt off the hair," and hid not his face from ſpitting. Now the meek Lamb is content to be, as the ram caught in the thickets, to be ſlaughtered and ſacrificed in our room, who were lying bound like Iſaac, to have been the ſacrifice. Oh, it was our ſins that platted the thorns; they alſo were the reed that drove them into his temples, yet he opened not his mouth.

5. Now this ſlaughtered Lamb is ſet before my eyes in the ſacrament, and God's call to me is, "Behold the Lamb of God," John i. 29. Now let me behold him with an earneſt and ſteady look, with faith and expectation, that I may get healing to all my diſeaſes. As no ſtung Iſraelite got healing from the brazen ſerpent, unleſs they looked to it, ſo none can get benefit from Chriſt, unleſs they behold him. May I never look away from this Lamb, to my tears, convictions, prayers, reformations, or any thing elſe; ſeeing the beſt of duties will make bad ſaviours. If I expect ſalvation from other things, I am undone, for there is no other name given under heaven whereby men can be ſaved: But if I look to the Lamb of God, my ſalvation is ſecured by his promiſe, Iſa. xlv. 22.

6. There was no houſe in Egypt ſafe from the deſtroying angel, but thoſe who had their doors ſprinkled with the blood of the paſchal lamb: So there is no ſoul ſafe from the ſword of revenging juſtice, but thoſe who by faith put themſelves under the protection of the blood of this ſlain Lamb: Let me therefore take the bunch of hyſſop, *faith*, and dip it in the baſon of the new covenant, and ſprinkle this blood on my guilty ſoul, and ſo I ſhall be ſafe.

7. How bleſſed is their characters who follow the Lamb, Rev xiv. 4. May I follow him as my Phyſician to cure me, my Righteouſneſs to juſtify me, my Life to quicken me, my Huſband to ſupply my wants, my Guide to conduct me, my Pattern to direct me in my ſteps. Let me learn, from his example, to be patient without murmuring, when I am under affliction. Let me learn meekneſs towards men, when I meet with re-

proaches or injuries from them. Let me learn a readineſs to obey God's call to every duty. O did Chriſt go willingly to the ſlaughter for us; and ſhall I be backward to pray, communicate, part with ſin, or do any thing he requires of me? Let me, in all duties and ordinances, ſeek after the Lamb's preſence, ſeeing my eternal happineſs lies in being ever with the Lamb, and to be fed and led by him, Rev. vii. 16.

MEDITATION XVI.

From Eph. i. 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood.*

HOW diſmal is our caſe by nature! We are ſlaves to ſin and ſatan, and priſoners to the juſtice of God, being ſentenced to die, doomed to wrath, and reſerved to public judgment and execution. In this miſerable condition were all mankind, until Chriſt came to ranſom us: And O how difficult and coſtly was our redemption to Chriſt! no leſs could be the price of it, than his precious blood. The glorious Son of God, who created heaven and earth, muſt become a creature, be born of a woman, and pour out his blood on an ignominious croſs, before we could be redeemed from ſin and wrath. O how valuable muſt the blood of this infinite Perſon be! What is the blood of earthly kings and princes to this blood! Surely one drop of it is of more value than an ocean of theirs! and yet every drop of this blood was poured out upon the ground for our redemption. In this blood I ſee ſundry things:

1. The amazing love of Chriſt, in ſhedding his blood for the redemption of ſuch creatures as I am; creatures muſt ugly, that had loſt the image of God, and got ſatan's image pictured in its room, and were thereby become black as hell. Creatures, loathſome as dead carcaſes, being dead in treſpaſſes; and yet thoſe he loved

loved ſo as to ſhed his blood, and bleed to death for them. For as lovely as Sarah was, while alive, yet when dead, Abraham could look on her no more, but would have her buried out of his ſight. But Chriſt ſaid not ſo of his elect ſpouſe when dead; no, ſaid he, let me bleed and die for her to bring her to life; though at the ſame time ſhe was more loathſome than Job with his boils, Lazarus with his ſores, or any dead carcaſe with vermin. O what cauſe could be given for the love of a bleeding Jeſus? Well might he ſay, "I loved you, becauſe I loved you; and I loved you freely." And O with what ſorrow, pain and agony, was his bleeding love attended, while his dear ſoul was overwhelmed with the terrible billows of his Father's wrath! Chriſt knew well before hand all theſe ſufferings, and all the ingredients in the cup, yet he would needs drink it for us: He foreſaw the poiſon of God's arrows that would drink up his ſpirits; the burning thirſt that the heat of divine wrath would create in him; yet willingly did he go to bleed and die, like a lamb to the ſlaughter. "O love that paſſeth knowledge!"

2. In Chriſt's blood I ſee the glory of infinite wiſdom diſplayed: Who could have found out a way to reconcile juſtice and mercy, and ſatisfy both their demands about Adam's fallen race? A general council of angels could never have thought of the Son of God his being made fleſh and ſhedding his blood! How ſhocking would the ſuggeſtion have been, if God had not made it? But, behold hereby *infinite wiſdom* hath diſcovered a way to gratify both juſtice and mercy; to puniſh ſin, and yet pardon the ſinner; to maintain the honour of the *law giver*, and yet preſerve the life of the *law-breaker*: Hereby *mercy* is ſatisfied in ſparing the rebel; and yet *juſtice* more glorified, and *ſin* rendered more odious, than if the ſinner himſelf had been eternally damned for it. Nay, though all the men on earth had been caſt into hell-fire for ſin, and the angels with them, it had been no ſuch inſtance of juſtice, as Chriſt's bleeding and dying for ſin: For what is the puniſhing of creatures, to the ſuffering of the Creator!

3. This blood being the blood of God, hath infinite virtue and efficacy; it hath purchaſed the church of God, and all grace and glory to her, Acts xx. 28. it protects all who come under the covert of it from the wrath of God, Exod. xii. 13. "When I ſee the blood, I will paſs over you, and the plague ſhall not be upon you to deſtroy you, when I ſmite the land of Egypt." This blood, which is the price of our redemption, hath marvellous effects; it pleads for the guilty, and obtains pardon of ſin, peace with God, nearneſs to and communion with him. It cleanſes, heals, ſatisfies and beautifies periſhing ſouls; it ſeals the New Teſtament, overcomes our enemies, liberates the priſoners, opens heaven's gates, and gives boldneſs to enter in: The Perſon of our Redeemer being preferable to a million of worlds full of men and angels, his blood alone might well ſerve for an elect world. What ſins can be ſo heinous or ſo numerous, but the blood of God can waſh away? This was famous Cranmer's ſupport that day he ſuffered martyrdom; when his heinous ſin of renouncing the truth ſtared him in the face, and he was greatly dejected for it; he brake out, "Surely God was made fleſh, and ſhed his blood, not for leſſer ſins only, but for great ſins alſo:" This relieved him, and made him die with courage. This blood can help in all ſtraits, deliver from all fears, and is able to ſave to the uttermoſt. It hath ſaved many who have condemned themſelves, and thought their ſalvation impoſſible. It hath eaſed many conſciences, when the terrors of the Almighty have ſurrounded them, and his arrows have ſtuck faſt in them. It hath unſtinged death, and carried many ſafe through its darkeſt vallies. This blood hath cleanſed many whoſe hearts were filthy as the mire, and whoſe lives ſwarmed with the moſt abominable luſts, ſuch as the Corinthians, 1 Cor. v. 11. and three thouſand of thoſe who had imbrued their hands in ſhedding of it, Acts ii. 36. Nay, it is able to take away the ſins of a world, John i. 29. and much more the ſins of any one ſoul, though like a mountain for weight, or the ſand for number.

4. I

4. I ſee this redeeming blood to be a ſuitable remedy for all my maladies; O that I could look to it by faith, apply it to my ſores, and plead it with God: "Lord, I am an unrighteous creature, but here is juſtifying blood; my heart is unholy, but here is ſanctifying blood; my ſoul is wounded, but here is healing blood; my luſts are ſtrong, but here is mortifying blood; my heart is hard, but here is ſoftening blood; my affections are dead, but here is quickening blood; my love is cold, but here is heart-warming blood. When I am at the holy table, I am near this bleſſed remedy; O let me not miſs a cure, when the balm of Gilead is among my hands; let me not periſh in my guilt beſide the open Fountain. Oh, this blood hath healed thouſands, and ſhall I remain under my plagues? Lord, let that innocent blood, which ran from thy hands, heart, and ſide, dropon my guilty ſoul, and cleanſe me from all ſin. O my glorious bleeding Lamb, "if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean." O ſay to me, as thou didſt to the leper, "I will, be thou clean." Surely thy blood is more able to ſave me, than my ſins are to deſtroy me."

5. How juſt is it, that I ſhould commemorate the ſhedding of this blood in the way that Chriſt appoints? Lord help me to go to thy table, and realize the ſhedding of this blood to myſelf, as much as if I had ſtood by the croſs, and ſeen it with my eyes flowing from his wounds. Let my faith be the evidence of things not ſeen, and let it realize the ſhedding of Chriſt's blood as evidently to me, as if I had actually ſeen it. Ah, I cannot ſay it is ſo, while my eyes are ſo dry, and my heart ſo hard; alas for my ſtupid unconcerned heart, that doth not burſt into love and tears at the ſacramental view of this blood-ſhedding! How can I ſee theſe hands, that ſway the ſceptre of the heavens, nailed to the tree of reproach, and not mourn? How can I ſee thoſe feet, that trample on the powers of hell, nailed to a tree, and not weep! Did the earth tremble, rocks rend, ſun hide, and heavens darken, and will not my rocky heart rend for ſin, that cauſed all?—— Since thou, Lord, comes to me in ſtreams of blood, let

let me go forth and meet thee with ſtreams of tears. Oh, ſhall I be more ſparing of my tears for Chriſt, than he was of his blood for me? Can I ſee this precious blood run down in ſtreams, and my eyes not pour out ſome drops? Can I refuſe drops of water for ſtreams of blood? Can I ſee the blood of the King of kings ſpilt like water on the ground, and the earth drinking it up, and my heart not rend for ſhedding it? Oh, that "my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night" for the ſlain Lamb of God!

6. How dreadful muſt the crime be, to tread this blood under foot by unbelief, or unworthy communicating! "Had Zimri peace, that ſlew his maſter?" And can I have peace, if I be guilty of the blood of him that is my Maſter and Redeemer both? How ſad will my caſe be, if that blood, which alone can procure my pardon, ſhall cry for my eternal puniſhment? "Deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, O God." O that I could value and eſteem, plead, and apply this precious blood more! Lord, accept of it as a full ſatisfaction for all my ſins, and an all-ſufficient price for my ſoul's redemption. Is not one drop of thy Son's blood of more value than a ſea of mine? My ſins, alas, have ſhut me out of paradiſe, but O let this blood open paradiſe to me again; and let me, through this Red ſea, enter into the heavenly Canaan; I know I can have no other paſſage to it. Lord, impute not the guilt, but the merit of this blood to me.

MEDITATION

MEDITATION XVII.

From Pſal. lxxii. 6. *He ſhall come down like rain upon the mown graſs, as ſhowers that water the earth.*

THIS is ſpoken and promiſed of Chriſt, and ſerves to teach us, that Chriſt coming to his church and people, by the gracious influences of his holy Spirit, is moſt uſeful and refreſhing to their ſouls, like ſhowers of rain to the dry ground, or a meadow newly cut, to make it ſpring again. Chriſtleſs ſouls are like the dry ground, without the moiſture of ſaving grace, their hearts are hard; neither rods, mercies, nor ſermons, make impreſſion upon them: Why? they are without Chriſt the Fountain of grace and ſpiritual influences. Before the fall, man's ſoul was like a well-watered garden, beautiful, green, and fragrant; but by his apoſtacy from God, in Adam our firſt head, the ſprings of grace and holineſs are quite dried up in his ſoul; and there is no curing of this drought, but by the ſoul's union with a new Head, to wit, *Chriſt, our ſecond Adam*, who has the Spirit given him without meaſure, for the uſe of his members. Now, when we are united by faith to Chriſt, our Head of influences, "the dry land is turned into water-ſprings;" Chriſt comes down as the rain by his Spirit of regeneration, and brings the ſprings of grace into the ſoul. He is the firſt and immediate receptacle of the holy Spirit, and all the regenerating and ſanctifying influences, and out of his fulneſs we muſt by faith receive them. And when at any time the ſprings of grace are interrupted in the ſoul by ſin or unbelief, ſo as the ground turns dry, the plants wither, and the things which remain are ready to die; the ſoul hath need to look up to Jeſus Chriſt, to come down with new ſhowers upon the thirſty ground, and decayed plants.

1. As the rain is the free gift of God to the dry ground, it comes free and cheap to poor and rich, ſmall and great, and coſts them nothing: So Chriſt, with his bleſſings, is God's free gift to a dry periſhing world, for which we ſhould continually be thankful. 2. As nothing can ſtop the falling of *rain*; ſo nothing can hinder Chriſt's gracious influences, when he deſigns to awake, convince, or ſoften a hard heart. When thoſe ſhowers do fall on ſinners, the moſt obſtinate will, muſt yield, and cry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" 3. As the *rain* is moſt neceſſary and ſuitable to the dry ground, and to the various plants it produceth, and alſo to the different parts of every plant or tree; ſuch as the root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit; ſo Chriſt is abſolutely neceſſary, and his influences moſt ſuitable, to all his peoples ſouls, and to every faculty of them, the underſtanding, will, memory, and affections; and to all their different graces, faith, love, repentance, &c. to root and ſtabliſh them, ſtrengthen and confirm them, quicken and increaſe them, cheriſh and preſerve them. 4. As the *rain* comes down in divers ways and manners to the earth, ſometimes with cold winds and tempeſts, thunders and lightnings; and at other times with calmneſs and warmth: So Chriſt comes to ſinners, ſometimes with ſharp convictions and legal terrors, and ſometimes with alluring invitations and promiſes. 5. O how pleaſant are the effects of *rain* to languiſhing plants, to make them green and beautiful, lively and ſtrong, fragrant and fruitful? So the effects of Chriſt's influences are moſt deſireable to drooping ſouls, for enlightening and enlivening them, for confirming and ſtrengthening them, for comforting and enlarging them, for appetizing and ſatisfying them, transforming and beautifying them. A ſhower from Chriſt would ſoon make the church, though withered, turn green and beautiful, and to ſend forth a ſmell as of a field that the Lord hath bleſſed; and likewiſe ſome drops of this ſhower, falling down upon the languiſhing graces of communicants, would ſoon make them vigorous and lively in ſhewing forth their Saviour's death at his table.

Here

Here I may ſee the reaſon why many ſouls continue as dry ground in their parched natural condition, while others near them are flouriſhing and fruitful; Chriſt's ſhower hath come down upon the one, and not upon the other; one piece is rained upon, and another piece is dry and withered, according to that word in Amos iv. 7. Oh, what cauſe is there to bewail the evident ſymptoms of this continuing natural drought in multitudes of ſouls! Why! their hearts are hard, impenetrable and unaffected with the miſerable ſtate they are in by nature, and with the woful plagues of their hearts. They have no ſenſe or feeling of the evil nature of ſin, notwithſtanding of all the reproofs and threatenings of the word, or the rods and ſtrokes it brings upon them; or of the ſufferings of Chriſt for ſin. And though God aſſures them, that the end of dry ground is *curſing* and *burning*, they are impenitent and unconcerned under all. O if parched ſouls in their natural eſtate were made ſenſible of their miſery, and brought to bewail their caſe, and ſay, "O I am as the heath in the deſart, that ſees no rain; I am a dry tree; if I continue in this ſtate, I will be cut down as cumbering the ground, and made fuel to hell-fire. I ſee the ax of juſtice laid to my root, every hour I am in danger of the blow. O if Chriſt would interpoſe to ſpare me, and come down upon me as the rain, and bring the moiſture of grace into my ſoul."

How lamentable alſo is the caſe of thoſe who once ſeemed to be watered by this heavenly rain, and now are parched by a long conſuming drought and withering wind! They have loſt their former greenneſs and moiſture, their ſpirituality and livelineſs, and their duties are quite dwindled away into a lifeleſs carcaſe and dead formality. They have loſt their wonted freedom and enlargement in prayer, and are fallen under ſad bonds and ſtraitenings of ſpirit, which makes them count holy things a wearineſs, and frequently neglect ſecret prayer. Surely ſuch have great need of Chriſt's coming down upon them as the rain, to make them ſpring up as the graſs, and revive as the corn. Alas, we have a ſinful hand in bringing on ſuch a ſpiri-

tual drought, by quenching the motions of the Spirit, indulging fleſhly luſts, giving the world Chriſt's room in the heart, and neglecting to live by faith on the Son of God, who is the Rain and Dew of Iſrael.

How happy are thoſe who live under the droppings of this rain! They are like trees planted by the waters, their roots ſpread forth, and their leaves are green, Jer. xvii. 8. "Have I the ſigns of ſuch perſons? Is my heart ready to melt at the ſight of a crucified Jeſus ſet before me in the ſacrament? Do I mourn for my ſins that pierced him? Am I ready to think worſe of myſelf than any other perſon can? Is my heart ſoft and pliable to the will of God, both in his precepts and providences! Do the world's good things bulk but little in my eye? Is it my deſire to meet with Chriſt in every duty and ordinance? Do I ſtill look on ſin as Chriſt's enemy? Am I afraid of provoking him by ſin to withhold the ſhowers, and make the heavens as braſs to me? Am I deſirous to bring forth fruit anſwerable to the waterings he graciouſly allows me." O may I find theſe marks in my ſoul.

O that I could earneſtly plead for the fulfilling of this promiſe in the text, that Chriſt would come down as the rain, that he would ſend the ſhowers he hath merited and promiſed, ſend them to myſelf, to the church, and to the whole land; to the preſent age and to the riſing generation. O what glorious effects would theſe ſhowers produce! They would beautify the church and her aſſemblies, make both miniſters and profeſſors to ſhine in holineſs, and congregations to be lively in worſhip. They would open priſon-doors, looſe bonds, enlarge hearts, revive drooping ſouls, turn their water into wine, their ſorrow into joy, their complaints into praiſes, and make them ſing in the ways of the Lord. By theſe ſhowers God would be glorified, the church cemented, and her diſtempers healed. Ordinances would be ſucceſsful, communions more pleaſant, the godly more valued, religion more eſteemed, and the way to heaven more delightful. Lord, look on the dry ground and preſent droughty ſeaſon with pity, open the windows of heaven, and ſend down ſhowers

as

as in former times, as in other parts of the world. Send a ſhower to young communicants, and to thoſe who have not ſeen thy goings in the ſanctuary: A ſhower to ſtony hearts and withered hands; a ſhower to ſoften the clods, looſe the roots, and open the ſprings. O how much good would one of Chriſt's ſhowers do to a poor dry land! what wonders would it work! what priſoners would it looſe! what cloudy minds would it brighten, and what doubting ſouls would it reſolve! Come down, Lord Jeſus. Amen.

MEDITATION XVIII.

From Mat. viii. 8. *Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof.*

FAITH and repentance do ſtill go together; every believer is a true penitent: he that puts on the Lord Jeſus, is alſo clothed with humility. The higher thoughts a man hath of Chriſt, the lower thoughts will he have of himſelf. When the man's eyes are open to ſee the holineſs and excellency of Chriſt, he is made to own his own nothingneſs before him, and his infinite diſtance from him, and to ſay, like the centurion in the text, "I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof," *q. d.* It is too great an honour for ſuch a guilty and filthy creature to entertain a Saviour of infinite purity; my heart is more unworthy than my houſe, I have nothing to commend me to thee. The lowly ſoul abhors himſelf, as vile in the ſight of a holy God: he ſays, I am all as an unclean thing, and all my righteouſneſs is as filthy rags; in me dwells no good thing; I am inſufficient of myſelf to do any thing that is good, or even to think a good thought; it is God that muſt work in me, both to will and to do, of his good pleapleaſure. He is under no obligation to pity or help me, it will be abſolute free mercy in him, if he do it. The lowly man hath undervaluing thoughts of himſelf,

and of all his own doings and attainments: he renounceth all confidence in his own righteouſneſs, and humby ſubmits to the righteouſneſs of God by faith: he is content to be ſtript of all his own garments, that Chriſt may be his cloathing: he looks not to his own performances to recommend him to God, but only to Chriſt his Surety: he is willing to go out of himſelf, and live wholly upon borrowed righteouſneſs and borrowed ſtrength, even to live upon Chriſt crucified, and to derive, daily and hourly, from him, ſtrength both for duty and difficulty, for work and warfare. The man that is lowly in heart, ſubmits to the will of God in all his diſpenſations, is content with every condition he thinks beſt for him; he is patient in affliction, and ſilent under God's rod, without anſwering again. He is ſenſible that he juſtly deſerveth hell, and therefore is very thankful for the leaſt mercy; like the woman of Canaan, he owns himſelf unworthy as a dog, and will be thankful for the crumbs that fall from the childrens table. He will be thankful for a word from Chriſt, for a look, for a ſmile, for the leaſt token of his favour, or the ſmalleſt influence of his Spirit.

Wherever faith is in exerciſe, it is a ſoul-humbling and ſelf-emptying grace, and lays the ſoul very low before God; and God always hath reſpect to ſuch faith and to ſuch lowlineſs, Pſal. cxxxviii. 6. Chriſt put great reſpect upon the lowly *centurion*, Mat. viii. 10, 13. "I have not found ſo great faith, no, not in Iſrael; go thy way, and as thou haſt believed, ſo be it done unto thee." He alſo put great reſpect on the humble *publican*, Luke xviii. 13, 14. and declared him juſtified; for (ſaith he) "He that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted." He put great honour on the humble woman of Canaan, that owned herſelf vile as a dog, Mat. xv. 27. "O woman, great is thy faith, (ſaid he) be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And he ſaith of himſelf, Iſa. lviii. 15. though he be "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, yet he dwells with the humble ſpirit." And thus he ſets himſelf before us, as the great pattern of *humility*, and bids us learn it of him. When he appeared unto Moſes, it was not on a *lofty cedar*, but in a low, mean, *humble buſh*. And when he would appear in our nature

nature, it was not a *great exalted woman* he takes up with, but a *low humble virgin*, as Mary herſelf obſerves, Luke i. 48, 52. May I be helped then to appear before him at his holy table, with a humble ſpirit, and lowly frame, that he may vouchſafe to dwell and hold communion with me.

O that I had the marks of a lowly heart, and could ſay, that I bluſh, and am aſhamed before God in prayer, becauſe of my ſinfulneſs and pollution! that I am made to wonder at free grace in ſparing ſuch a vile unthankful wretch, in keeping me out of hell, in offering me Chriſt and pardon through his blood, and calling me to his holy table. That I diſclaim all righteouſneſs by the law, and expect nothing but wrath and ruin from that airth; that I look only to Chriſt, and have admiring thoughts of him and his law-biding righteouſneſs.—That I have a deep ſenſe of indwelling ſin, and of the corruptions of my heart, and think more meanly of myſelf than any other perſon can.—That I am jealous of my wicked heart, and afraid leſt I betray or wound the Son of God, and contract blood guiltineſs; and therefore I adventure to his table with much fear and trembling. Lord, beſtow upon me ſuch a humble heart.

O can ſuch an ill-deſerving creature appear before God, and expect mercy, who have ſo long abuſed mercy! Lord, inſtead of ſtretching forth a ſceptre of mercy to invite me to thy table, thou mighteſt, with the rod of thy juſtice, juſtly daſh me in pieces as a potter's veſſel. Inſtead of entertaining me with the bread of life, and the cup of bleſſing, thou mighteſt give me the bread and water of affliction; yea, caſt me into that pit, where I ſhould cry in vain for a drop of water to cool my thirſty tongue. O ſhall ſuch a wretched dog as I preſume to come to thy table, and eat of the childrens bread, who am not worthy to eat of the crumbs that fall from it! But I have heard of the mercy of the King of Iſrael; that he delights to ſhow it to the unworthy, that humble themſelves before him. Oh, I am vile, and unfit to appear before thee; but ſurely, they are undone who keep away from thee. I am come to thee, not

becauſe

becauſe I am fit or worthy, but becauſe thou art rich in mercy; and haſt contrived a way for ſaving the like of me. Lord, I am not worthy to come within ſight of thee, but far leſs that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof to lodge with me! "Will God in very deed come and dwell with men!" This is a wonder, though all men were as innocent and righteous as once Adam was! But will he lodge or feaſt with me that am a leper? Will he come under the roof of my ſoul, a houſe ſo ruinous, ſmoaky and defiled, where he has not a fit place to lay his head? But, O my humble, condeſcending Saviour did not diſdain to ly in a manger among beaſts, nor to dine with Simon a leper! O Lord Jeſus, come in thyſelf and furniſh the houſe, prepare an upper-room in my ſoul, large, ſwept, and garniſhed, and there abide, and keep the paſſover with me.

Lord, I am not worthy to eat the crumbs that fall from my own table, much leſs thoſe that fall from thine. I deſerve not a room to ſtand among thy ſervants, far leſs to ſit down with thy children. I am not worthy of my daily bread from thee, and ſhall I be allowed to eat of the bread of life? Shall I, who deſerve not the bread of *men*, be admitted to eat the bread of *angels*? Shall I ſit down with him, at whoſe feet they fall? If John the Babtiſt (one of the greateſt that was born of women, who was filled with the Holy Ghoſt from the womb,) thought himſelf not worthy to looſe Chriſt's ſhoes, how unworthy am I, the meaneſt of creatures, a tranſgreſſor from the womb, to be admitted to touch, nay, feed upon Chriſt's broken body and ſhed blood! If Peter, after ſeeing Chriſt's glory, and his own vileneſs, judged himſelf unworthy to be in the ſame ſhip with Chriſt, and cried, "Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man:" How ſhall I, the chief of ſinners, adventure to ſit down at the ſame table with him in a familiar way! If the woman with the bloody-iſſue was afraid to come and touch the hem of Chriſt's garment, how much more may I, who am full of the running iſſues of ſin, fear to touch the ſymbol of his body and blood, or put my hand into his ſide? If the pureſt angels muſt cover their faces when before him, how ſhall I, who

am

am ſo impure, appear openly in his preſence? But glory to God, for the bleſſed covering provided for my guilty ſoul, under which I may appear and be accepted. I come to thee wrapt in it, Lord, accept of me.

O how diſtinguiſhing are thy favours to me an unworthy creature! Thou mighteſt juſtly have put in my hand a cup of trembling and unmixed wrath, a cup filled with horror of conſcience and fearful deſpair: But, inſtead thereof, thou giveſt me the cup of bleſſing, filled with the hope of pardon and eternal life. I might have been in hell drinking the damned's cup of wrath, into which juſtice is ſtill pouring in as faſt as they drink out: But glory to free grace, thou calleſt me to drink the cup of ſalvation, which my Saviour hath purchaſed with his blood, and ſweetened with his bleſſing. Thanks be to God for it for ever.

MEDITATION XIX.

From 2 Cor. xi. 15. *Thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable gift.*

MANY give thanks to God for meat and drink to their bodies, which indeed is the duty of all; but alas, few give thanks to God for Jeſus Chriſt, the only food of precious ſouls, and God's unſpeakable gift to men! Many are fond of temperal gifts and earthly riches, which are nothing but vanity; but ah, they are eaſy about this Pearl of great price, this matchleſs gift, whoſe value no tongue can expreſs, nor open up what is contained in it. The apoſtle tells us a great truth, Eph. i. 3. that "God bleſſes us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt" In this *gift of God*, we have innumerable gifts beſtowed on thoſe who believe on him; ſuch as the gift of ſpiritual illumination, pardon of ſin, a law-biding righteouſneſs, reconciliation with God, adoption into his family, reſtoring of his image, ſanctifying influences, ſpiritual ſtrength for work and warfare, looſing

of

of bonds, witneſſing of the Spirit, unſtinging of death, conduct through the dark valley, and a title to the manſions of glory, and the eternal enjoyment of God. Chriſt is the moſt neceſſary and moſt enriching gift ever was given to the world. God gave him to be a *Plank of mercy*, to ſave our ſouls when ſhipwrecked. He gave him to be our Phyſician and balm, to heal us when our wounds ſeemed incurable. He gave him to be "the Lord our righteouſneſs," when we had no righteouſneſs. He gave him to be our Advocate to plead for us, when we had many accuſers, and none to take our part. He gave him to us to be "wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption." In this gift there is *infinite fulneſs* and *unſearchable riches*. Well may the ſpouſe call Chriſt a "bundle of myrrh, and a cluſter of camphire," Cant. i. 13, 14. becauſe ſo many gifts and bleſſings are bundled up in this one gift. Oh, what can I conceive, or what can I expreſs of this gift! He that would deſcribe, or ſpeak of this gift, would need to have his tongue dipt in heaven. Should an angel come down from it to tell us of this gift, he would outſpeak all the men on earth; yet, when he had ſaid all he could, the gift would be far above his expreſſion; Why? becauſe he is *unſpeakable*.

Thanks be unto God that gave us not a ſervant, not an angel, not a friend, but *his Son*. Not an adopted ſon, but his own Son by eternal generation: "A Son, who is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his Perſon." Yea, he gave us his only Son, to die as a ſacrifice in our room! How bitterly did Jacob bewail the parting with one ſon, when he had eleven behind! But God gave his only begotten Son, and the Son of his love for us! It is recorded, as an admirable inſtance of Abraham's obedience, that he was willing to part with his only ſon at God's command, Gen. xxii. 12. "Now I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not withheld thy ſon, thine only ſon, from me." But what was Abraham's ſon to God's eternal Son, the ſecond Perſon of the glorious Trinity! a Son that was his equal! a Son in whom his ſoul delighted! a Son that never diſpleaſed him at any time!

How

How bitterly did David mourn at parting with a rebellious ſon! "O Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon, would to God I had died for thee," &c. But what are all the ſons of men, or ten thouſand worlds full of men, or as many heavens full of angels, to the beloved Son of God, whom all the angels worſhip and adore! And yet this is the gift which God gives us. In giving this gift, divine bounty hath ſtretched itſelf to the uttermoſt: He could have created a million of heavens more bright, and millions of angels more glorious, for us; but a more glorious Son he had not, nor could have; a greater gift he had not in all his treaſures, than his own coeternal and conſubſtantial Son, yet he makes a free gift of him to us! O who would not give thanks unto God for this his unſpeakable gift! And who would not part with all the world, to have an intereſt in this gift ſealed to him at the Lord's table! This is the gift that ſweetens all other gifts, and without which nothing in a world hath any ſweetneſs in it.

This gift of God is moſt free; it was impoſſible that the world could have Chriſt any other way, than as a free gift. A man like old Jacob may be bereaved of his children, but it was not poſſible that God could be bereaved of his dear Son. Neither could we have him by purchaſe; we were ſo poor, we had nothing wherewith to purchaſe the leaſt bleſſing. And what though all the riches of the world had been ours, though all its mountains had been gold, pearls, or diamonds, they would not have been ſufficient to purchaſe one ſight of this gift, far leſs a right to it. Nor could ever any motive be found out for beſtowing this gift, but the mere free love of God, John iii. 19. "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son:" As if he had ſaid, ſince the world hath no merit, nor price, worth nor motive, to obtain this bleſſing, I juſt make a free gift of him to the world: Take him freely, poor beggars of Adam's family; take him, and he will enrich you all! And O how ſeaſonable and unexpectedly was this gift given! Adam, when he came trembling before God after his fall, looking for his final doom, did little expect ſuch a gift, until God himſelf, to the

aſtoniſhment of angels and men, promiſed the ſeed of the woman. Who could have thought, that the great God would have gifted his dear Son to ſuch vile wretches, ſinners that were not ſeeking him! Nay, who of mankind could have deſired ſuch a gift? Indeed, when we had been periſhing, we might have looked up, and cried, O God, have mercy upon us: But who would have ſaid, O give the Son of thy love to bear the wrath due to us! We neither deſerved, nor deſired this gift, but God gave it moſt freely and ſurpriſingly! When Adam broke God's covenant, he was purſued with a cry, "Adam, where art thou?" Doubtleſs, Adam expected a terrible blow from the ſword of juſtice; but, behold, he is purſued with a cry, and the unſpeakable gift in the Crier's hand! O how ſurpriſing was this to poor, trembling, guilty Adam! What cauſe had he to cry, "Thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable gift!" *What ſhall I render to the Lord for ſuch a Gift!* And the ſame cauſe have we.

O wonderful love! this free gift is offered freely to the pooreſt creature of Adam's family; ſo that ſuch an one as I, am warranted to accept and embrace it, and make ſure my intereſt in it; "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." Many covet other gifts, but I covet this beſt Gift, this enriching Gift; this is a lawful covetouſneſs: I receive this Gift of God into my boſom, into my very heart. O that I had the marks of thoſe who poſſeſs this Gift, and are truly thankful for it! Can I ſay, that this Gift is truly precious in my eyes, and that I eſteem it far above all temporal gifts whatſomever: That I am oft thinking upon his matchleſs excellency, his low ſtoop and condeſcending love; and do I frequently break out with the Pſalmiſt, "whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I deſire beſides thee." Have I low thoughts of myſelf, as unworthy that Chriſt ſhould come under my roof, reckoning myſelf, with Paul, "the leaſt of all ſaints, and chief of ſinners? Do I renounce all Chriſt's rivals and competitors, ſuch as my beloved luſts, and beloved righteouſneſs? Do I count all my doings and duties, "but loſs and dung" for the righteouſneſs of Chriſt?

Do I take the crown off every head, and put it upon Chriſt's head, and give him all the glory of my ſalvation and ſay, that "in the Lord Jeſus only I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength?" Am I careful to avoid every thing that would diſhonour Chriſt? and do I ſay to every temptation that offers, "How ſhall I do this wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God," or bring a reproach upon Chriſt and his ways! Do I rejoice when Chriſt is honoured, his throne raiſed, his glory advanced, and his ſubjects increaſed; and when ſtrangers and young ones are drawn to love and admire him? Am I often ſaying, "What ſhall I render unto the Lord for his unſpeakable Gift?" I am at a loſs how to expreſs my thankfulneſs: I have nothing to give him; but I'll render all I have to him, my ſoul, my body, my love, my praiſes, my time, my talents, my walk and converſation. Lord, accept of my two poor mites, ſoul and body, in token of my gratitude, for God's redeeming love and free Gift; and make me fit for giving thee thanks eternally for this unſpeakable Gift: O that I could apply theſe bleſſed marks to myſelf.

And O what thanks do I owe to my dear Saviour, that willingly ſubmitted to be Heaven's Gift to the children of men, yea frankly offered, and gave himſelf to be a Sacrifice for them, to drink of the brook in the way, even the cup of God's wrath, that we might drink the cup of God's bleſſing! O how low was our fall, that nothing could raiſe us up again, but the low abaſement of the Son of God! And O how low was the ſtep that he behoved to make to recover us! The Son of God muſt be tread upon as a worm! The almighty Phyſician muſt come from heaven, and let his heart be pierced, to prepare a medicine to cure our diſeaſe! He that "thought it no robbery to be equal with God," muſt be made equal to robbers and murderers! He muſt not only ſuffer death, but deſertion alſo, from God, from man, and the whole creation! He gave himſelf not only to ſuffer the pangs of death, but the pains of hell; not only the ſorrows of dying men, but the ſorrows of damned ſouls! O unſpeakable Gift!

MEDITATION XX.

From Luke ix. 22. *The Son of Man muſt ſuffer many things.*

OUR Lord oft ſpoke of his ſufferings to his diſciples, becauſe he would have them deeply imprinted upon the hearts of all his people, that they might always think upon them, and carry about with them the dying of the Lord Jeſus. As Chriſt foretold his ſufferings before hand, ſo they came exactly to paſs. He ſaid he muſt *ſuffer many things* for his people, and accordingly he did ſo: Let me view his ſufferings before I go to commemorate them at his table.

1. I muſt conſider him that ſuffered many things for us; the Spirit of God requires us to conſider the High-Prieſt, who he is, Heb. ii. 1. Though he calls himſelf in the text the Son of man, as to his human nature; yet he is alſo the Son of God as to his divine nature; yea, God equal with the Father, the great God our Saviour: This God-man, the WONDERFUL, is our High-Prieſt, that ſuffered many things for us. He is our glorious Immanuel, the innocent and immaculate Lamb of God, that had not the leaſt ſpot or crime of his own to ſuffer for. He is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, the expreſs image of his Perſon; he is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He that ſuffered, is he that went always about doing good to perſons of all ſorts, and deſerved well of thoſe who perſecuted and crucified him. He is the great lover of mankind, and Friend of ſinners, our glorious Benefactor, who remembered us in our low eſtate; one that comes under the moſt endearing characters to us, as that of our Father, our Huſband, our Brother, Maſter, Phyſician, Ranſomer, &c. Now will not a ſon be ſenſible of the ſufferings of his father, or a wife of the ſufferings of her huſband? Or one brother be touched with the ſufferings

ferings of another? This is the great High Prieſt that ſuffered *many things* for us.

2. I am to conſider the many things he ſuffered. Ah, they are ſo great, ſo various and manifold, I cannot recount nor comprehend them! I may ſay, he ſuffered in both natures: though his Godhead could not properly ſuffer grief or pain, yet it ſuffered an eclipſe for thirty three years, except a ſhort time it ſhone forth on mount Tabor. He ſuffered many things in his human nature, both in ſoul and body; he was perſecuted, tempted, calumniated, betrayed, bound, mocked, ſpit on, buffeted, ſcourged, wounded, crowned with thorns, and crucified. He ſuffered in all his offices; he was mocked as a Prophet, and bid propheſy who ſmote him; and as a Prieſt, he was bid ſave himſelf; ſeeing he pretended to ſave others; as a King, he was mocked with an old purple robe and thorny crown: he ſuffered in his honour and reputation; being diſgraced and reproached by men, called a Samaritan, one poſſeſſed of the devil, a blaſphemer, a glutton, a drunkard, a ſeducer, &c. he was even overwhelmed with calumny: he ſuffered as a blaſphemer againſt God, as a traitor to Cæſar, and an enemy to Moſes' law, though he was entirely free of them all: he was wounded and pierced in all parts of his body, in his head, hands and feet; in his cheeks, back and ſide: He ſuffered in his outward goods, being ſpoiled of all things, and even ſtript of his clothes to his very ſkin, and nailed to the croſs naked: he ſuffered in all his five ſenſes; his *ſight*, with the ſpiteful carriage of thoſe that paſſed by wagging their heads; his *hearing*, with their blaſphemous talk; his *ſmell*, with the noiſom ſavour of the ſkulls of the dead; his *taſte*, with vinegar and gall; his *feeling*, with thorns and nails piercing his head, hands and feet. —He ſuffered in the moſt tender and and ſinewy parts of his body by the tormenting nails, eſpecially being violently ſtretched out, and probably diſjointed, to make them reach to the holes; therefore he ſaith, Pſal. xxii. 16, 17. "They have digged my hands and my feet, I may tell all my bones; they look and ſtare upon me." He ſuffered moſt of all in his ſoul, and its noble faculties:

ties: How great was the agony and travel of his ſoul, when he ſwate blood in the garden through all the pores of his body! O how great was the anguiſh of his mind upon his heavenly Father's deſerting him, which made him ſend forth a dreadful cry to heaven for relief, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" Then it was he cried and groaned under the preſſure, but no relief appeared; there was none to anſwer, every door was ſhut againſt him: for at this time his own Sun, his own Heaven, his own Father, his own Godhead, did all hide their faces and conſolations from him! O the many things he ſuffered for us, they cannot be numbered.

3. I am to conſider from whom the Son of Man ſuffered. He ſuffered from all hands; from earth, from hell, from heaven; from men, from devils, from infinite juſtice. He ſuffered from all ſorts of men; from king Herod and his men of war, who mocked him and ſet him at nought; from the Jewiſh prieſts and rulers, who cruelly uſed and perſecuted him to death; from governor Pilate, who ſcourged and condemned him to be crucified: He ſuffered from the Jews and from the Romans, from the clergy and from the lawyers, from ſoldiers and ſervants, from great ones and commons, and even from thoſe he had done much good unto: He ſuffered from thoſe whom he came to ſave and waſh by his blood; for there were three thouſand of thoſe who crucified him, or were active in his ſufferings, that were converted to him by Peter's ſermon, Acts ii. He ſuffered not only from enemies, but from profeſſed friends and diſciples, one of theſe betrayed and ſold him, another of them denied and abjured him, and all the reſt forſook him, and left him alone to ſuffer in the midſt of devils and ruffians inſulting over him: he ſuffered from the devils, and all the powers of hell; thoſe dogs and bulls of Baſhan were all let looſe to tear and gore him in his laſt ſufferings; "for this (he ſaid) was their hour and power of darkneſs." But, which was worſt of all, he ſuffered alſo from heaven; for he being ſubſtituted in the room of ſinners, a juſt and a holy God acted as an inexorable Judge towards him, he frowned terribly

terribly upon him, ſmote him with the ſword of juſtice, and withdrew all the feeling of his loving kindneſs from him, and all the thoſe divine influences which might any way refreſh his troubled ſoul in the hour of his greateſt need: and thus he fell a ſacrifice to incenſed juſtice for our heinous guilt and provocations. At this time a fearful black cloud was ſpread over the glorious Sun of righteouſneſs, never was there any ſuch eclipſe ſeen or heard of as this! For a candle to be put out is no great matter, but for the ſun to be darkened, is very uncommon: But though ſun, moon, and ſtars had all been blown out at once, it would be nowiſe ſo amazing as the darkening of the eternal Sun of righteouſneſs upon the croſs! A ſtrange and marvellous ſight! What meant the heat of this great anger? Muſt even the Creator himſelf ſuffer for the creature's ſins? Muſt he ſuffer ſuch a load of wrath as make him cry out to the aſtoniſhment of angels and men!

4. I am to conſider the High Prieſt, and for whom it was he ſuffered theſe great and *many things*. He ſuffered not for himſelf, for he never offended either againſt God or man, and deſerved no puniſhment: he ſuffered none for fallen angels, they muſt all ſuffer for themſelves: it was only for men of Adam's race, that were debtors to juſtice and priſoners of wrath; he ſuffered for creatures moſt undeſerving, for rebels, and for many that were his greateſt enemies; and even for thoſe who were his murderers and executioners, for he both prayed and was heard for them, when they were pouring out his blood.

5. Let me conſider with what affection he ſuffered all theſe things for us. It was with ardent love to periſhing ſouls, which many waters could not quench; with fervent wiſhings and longings for the hour of his paſſion, "I have a baptiſm to be baptiſed with, and how am I ſtraitened until it be accompliſhed?"—with great liberality. It is not the blood of his finger, or a part of his blood, that he would ſhed for us; no, he would needs pour out all his blood, and even his heart-blood too, and with that he poured out his ſoul alſo, Iſa. liii. Why would he be ſo liberal? that with him there

there might be *plenteous redemption*, Pſal. cxxx. 7. He ſuffered with great meekneſs, patience, and reſignation; when he ſuffered, he threatened not, but was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter, dumb, not opening his mouth: with great humility and ſelf-denial, content to be as a "worm and no man," to bring glory to his Father: with a thirſty zeal for the ſalvation of ſouls, and for completing the work of our redemption; and hence it was he cried on the croſs, "I thirſt," and glad when he could ſay, "It is finiſhed."

O what cauſe have I to obey his dying charge, to go to this memorial-feaſt, and to think upon and wonder at the matchleſs love of Chriſt, that made him willing to ſuffer ſo many things for ſuch wretched creatures as I am. He knew well enough before-hand what our ſalvation would coſt him, yet he willingly undertook it, ſaying, upon the firſt motion of it, "Lo I come." But, ſaith God to him, if you will engage in this work, you muſt underly my wrath, and be handled as if you were the ſinner in law:—Well, ſaith Chriſt, "I come to do thy will, O God:" I am ſatisfied with the terms: let the cup be never ſo bitter, I will drink it ere theſe miſerable creatures do it. O loving High Prieſt! how ſhall I think of thy ſufferings without raptures of love and admiration! I had been in hell, if thou hadſt not been in an agony here; I had for ever been ſcorched there, if thou hadſt not ſwate here; yea, not only I, but all the poſterity of Adam had periſhed, if thou hadſt not ſuffered theſe *many things* for them: Surely the weight of wrath, which made thee heavy, and cauſed thee fall to ground, ſweat, groan and cry, would have ſunk all mankind into hell for ever. O what ingratitude muſt it be to refuſe Chriſt's offers and terms of ſalvation, after what he has ſuffered to purchaſe it! Was he at ſo much pains to obtain redemption for us, and will we be at no pains to get an intereſt in it! Did he ſhed blood, and will not I drop tears? Lord, pity this heart of mine.

MEDITATION

MEDITATION XXI.

From John xviii. 4. *Jeſus, knowing all things, that ſhould come upon him, went forth,* &c.

CHRIST foreknew all his ſufferings, with all their ingredients, before they came upon him, yet he willingly and reſolutely went forth to meet them. He will not flee, nor hide himſelf from his perſecutors, but caſt himſelf in their way. He ſaw the cup of wrath mixed and ready for him, and now as it were, he reaches forth his hand to take it. When the people would have forced him to a crown, he hid himſelf from them, John vi. 15. But when they would force him to a croſs, he offered himſelf to them, knowing that his hour was come to fulfil his ſuretyſhip for us, and complete our redemption. Upon this account he made his ſufferings welcome, and the paſſover that introduced them, Luke xxii. 15. "With deſire have I deſired to eat this paſſover." He abhorred all counſels that tended to hinder him; and rebuked Peter as ſmartly for diſſuading him from ſuffering, as he would have done ſatan himſelf, Matth. xvi. 23. And though all his diſciples would have diſſuaded him, John xi. 8. he marched with great forwardneſs to Jeruſalem, where he foretold the bloody tragedy was to be acted; he haſtened to the field of battle, and place of ſuffering: Yea, he went ſo faſt to it, that his diſciples were amazed at it, and afraid to follow him, Matth xx. 18. Mark x. 32. They were behind him, and would have fallen behind altogether, had it not been for ſhame, and let him go alone; they were amazed to ſee a man haſten ſo faſt to a bloody death: But he would not ſtop, though they had all left him, as they did afterwards. And when his time was come to be apprehended, he will neither let Peter defend him, nor angels reſcue him, though there were twelve legions at his call: One angel would have been ſufficient to do it, or one word from his own mouth; but, ſaith he, "The cup my Father hath given me to drink, ſhall I not

drink it?" Wherefore when they accuſed him of blaſphemy againſt God, and of enmity to Cæſar and Moſes's law, and things he was perfectly innocent of, he would make no legal defence to ſave his life before Pilate, but held his peace, in ſo much that Pilate marvelled greatly. He might think it was eaſy for him to anſwer all they ſaid, but he knew not the reaſon of our Lord's ſilence; viz. that he would do nothing to hinder the elect's redemption, which he had undertaken. And, as he was ſilent before Pilate, ſo was he before divine juſtice, and would do nothing to divert the ſtroke: Soon might he have reſcued himſelf when juſtice drew the ſword, by ſaying, "Father, theſe ſins are not mine:" No, he is ſilent, and takes with the charge, as if he had committed them all. On me, ſaith he, be the curſe; I will be the ſacrifice for theſe loſt ſheep. O love, unſpeakable!

The reaſons of my Saviour's willingneſs to ſuffer are obvious; he knew it was his Father's will he ſhould ſuffer, and therefore he ſaid, Pſal. xl. "I delight to do thy will, O my God." He knew it would greatly diſplay the glory of the divine attributes, that was ſullied by our ſins; it would highly magnify his love to his ſheep, John x. "I lay down my life for my ſheep:" I do it of myſelf, freely, without compulſion: It was neceſſary to make his ſacrifice acceptable and well pleaſing unto God. The Heathens would not offer a ſacrifice to their Gods that came ſtruggling to the altar; ſo every ſacrifice offered to the true God muſt be a free will offering, as we would have it of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour unto him. This Chriſt hath taught us by his example, and upon this account God hath twice proclaimed from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed."

O was Chriſt's willingneſs to ſuffer for ſinners ſo well-pleaſing to the Father, and ſhall it not render him moſt aimable and lovely to us? Surely the Mediator's frank and cheerful undertaking to ſuffer ſo much for us, when unrequired by us, is a favour infinitely kind and obliging, and doth command raptures of love and praiſe from us when we celebrate his holy ſupper.

What

What a moving ſight is it to the eye of faith, to behold our glorious Immanuel voluntarily ſtating himſelf in our law-room without the ſoliciting of any creature, and engaging cheerfully to go through ſatan's buffetings, death's pangs, and hell's flames for us! With what elevated thoughts, and raiſed affections, ſhould we admire, love and praiſe a crucified Jeſus, who did all this willingly and unrequired for us! Oh, he never had ſo good will to eat when hungry, as he had to ſuffer and ſatisfy juſtice for us! Hence it is ſaid, "My meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work," John iv. 34. Here is food, moſt delicious for faith to feed upon at the Redeemer's table. Again, from this willingneſs of Chriſt to ſuffer for us, I have good ground to conclude his willingneſs to receive us, when we come to him by faith to partake of the fruits of his ſufferings. O how can any believer, or ſenſible ſinner, queſtion or doubt of Chriſt's willingneſs to help and ſave them, who was ſo willing to offer himſelf a ſacrifice to juſtice for them? Surely he is far more willing to ſave, than any ſinner is to repent or believe. And from this I'll take my encouragement to come to him: Since my loving Jeſus came willingly as a lamb to the ſlaughter for ſinners, I'll venture, with humble confidence, to go to this meek, paſſionate, ſweet natured Lamb, for pity and help in the time of my need, truſting he will not reject me, nor any that comes to him upon his call in the goſpel. "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

O did Chriſt ſuffer the pains of death and hell ſo willingly for us, and ſhall not we be willing to ſuffer the reproachings and revilings of men, or any other perſecution, for him? And when any ſuch injuries are done us, ſhall not we bear them with meekneſs and patience after Chriſt's example, who ſubmitted cheerfully to every thing he knew to be his Father's will? Though he was perfectly innocent, and met with the greateſt provocation from wicked men, yet he patiently bore them; taking all as out of his Father's hand, who had mingled the cup for him. Therefore, when he was reviled, he reviled not again; he could have

with me, or take me up to thee. O muſt I ſtay behind thee amidſt the infectious defilements and enſnaring examples of an ungodly world? When I open my eyes here, what will meet them but multitudes wallowing in pride, ſenſuality, covetouſneſs, injuſtice, malice, envy, drunkenneſs, gluttony, uncleanneſs, contempt of God and religion? Muſt I ſtay to ſee this horrible ſight, the whole world lying in wickedneſs? Muſt I ſtay to hear God daily diſhonoured by the tongues of the ungodly? Muſt I ſtay to ſee Chriſt ſlighted, wounded, and crucified afreſh by wicked men? O what danger will I be in of being infected by their examples! But, Lord, if I could win away with thee, I would be quite out of hazard, and out of the world. How ſhall I ſtay behind thee in ſuch an earthly tabernacle, to be burdened with bodily diſtreſſes, ſickneſs, pains, and manifold complaints; and amidſt innumerable loſſes, croſſes and diſappointments from the creature? How ſhall I ſtay to ſee ſuch melancholy diviſions, contentions, debates, and ſeparations, as fall out among the people of God in Chriſt's abſence? Muſt I ſtay behind thee to ſuffer injuries, reproaches, cruel mockings, bad uſage and perſecutions, both from the tongues and hands of men; and ſome times to be torn as with the teeth of wild beaſts?—Hence this world is called "a den of lions and mountain of leopards," Cant. iv. 8. O could I win away to heaven with Chriſt, I would ſee no lion nor leopard there. There is none to hurt or deſtroy in all God's holy mountain above.

Have I ſeen the King in his beauty, and muſt I be left behind him? Hath the communion-table been like mount Tabor, where he was transfigured before my eyes, with his countenance ſhining, and his raiment white as light? and muſt I go down from the mount again to a land of darkneſs, of drought, and of perplexing doubts and fears, where I ſhall ſometimes go mourning without the Sun; yea, neither ſun nor ſtars appearing to me for many days? Muſt I be put to walk without the light of God's countenance, and without the food of my ſoul, communion with my God? After I have been lifted up, muſt I lay my account with being

being caſt down again, perhaps into depths like theſe of Aſaph, Pſal. lxxvii. or like thoſe of Heman, Pſal. lxxxviii. with fears of ſinking in them, and of falling ſhort of heaven for ever? Could I win away with Chriſt, I would be at once delivered from all theſe fears. Here my knowledge of God is ſmall, and often obſcured with darkneſs; my faith is weak, and often in hazard of being overwhelmed with unbelief: here my love is cold, and often like to be chilled with froſt-winds, from ſatan and the world; my prayers often are formal and wandering, my praiſes low and flat; here my beſt wiſhes are attended with many ſhort comings and defects. But, O if I could win to heaven with Chriſt, where grace and holineſs are in perfection, I would praiſe him without wandering, and ſerve him without ſin for ever! Here ſin ſtill cleaves to my nature, mixes itſelf with my ſervices, and defiles my beſt duties. Here I ſtill carry about with me a deceitful and treacherous heart, whereby I am in hazard of backſliding from God, and miſcarrying for ever, ſhould I be left to it. But, O were I with Chriſt, I would be free of all theſe anxious thoughts and fears. Lord, ſtay here with me, or take me up to thee.

But thou ſayeſt, It is expedient for me to ſtay behind for a time. Why, Lord? Muſt I ſtay that my travelling graces—my faith, hope, and patience,—may be tried and exerciſed here below, and thereby gradually ſtrengthened and ripened for the perfect ſtate? Muſt I ſtay that I may be conformed to my Head, both in ſerving and ſuffering; that thy wiſdom, power, and mercy, may be glorified in conducting and preſerving me through all difficulties and dangers of this wilderneſs: "Thy will, Lord, be done," only leave me not alone; but, "for thy name's ſake, lead me and guide me." Or, is it thy pleaſure to ſuſpend my heaven for a while, that I may promote thy glory on earth, be uſeful to the ſouls of others, and recommend my dear Redeemer to thoſe who know him not, which is a work I cannot do in heaven? O fit me for it by thy grace, and fill me with zeal for thy glory. O let thy kingdom come upon earth, that the kingdom of glory may be haſtened.

Thou

Thou ſayeſt, It is expedient for thee to go away. Why, Lord? Muſt thou thyſelf be thy people's Forerunner, to carry tidings to heaven of their complete redemption, and of their coming after thee in their ſeveral generations? Muſt thou go to open the paſſage, and pave the way for acceſs to their perſons and duties, and prepare rooms and lodgings for them againſt the time they come home? Muſt thou go away to be a public agent and interceſſor for thy people, under all their trials and toſſings here below, and likewiſe to provide and furniſh a rich and glorious communion-table for them in thy Father's houſe above? Lord, ſend thy Holy Spirit to fit and prepare me and many others, for that bleſſed entertainment. Lord, when thou ſaidſt, "It is expedient for you that I go away," thou didſt add, "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Why? it was ſo agreed in the council of the Trinity, that the ſending of the Spirit, in his plentiful effuſion, which was to be the purchaſe of Chriſt's death, ſhould be given in an anſwer to his interceſſion, when he entered within the vail, John xiv. 16. And the Spirit was to make uſe of it as an argument for convincing the world of the perfection and acceptableneſs of Chriſt's ſacrifice, that Chriſt was now received and welcomed into heaven. Likewiſe, the Spirit was to be given only upon Chriſt's aſcenſion, to ſupply the want of his bodily preſence to the church, as being far better for them, ſeeing Chriſt's bodily preſence could be in one place only at once, but the Spirit is in every place, to animate and put life in ordinances. May the church have this fruit of Chriſt's aſcenſion ſtill more and more.

Lord, though thou haſt gone away for neceſſary ends, yet thy marriage-contract with thy people, and the love-tokens thou giveſt them in the ſacrament, are ſure pledges of thy returning to pay them a comfortable viſit at laſt, according to that ſweet word, John xiv. 3. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myſelf, that where I am, there you may be alſo." O that I may be one of thoſe to whom Chriſt's viſit at his ſecond coming will be joyful and comfortable. Let me examine myſelf after the ſacra-

ment,

ment, if I have the marks of ſuch. Am I eſpouſed to Chriſt? Have I a high eſteem of the Bridegroom? Have I ſubſcribed the marriage-contract, and gone into Chriſt's terms! Do I heartily approve the whole contrivance of redemption, through the ſuretyſhip and righteouſneſs of Chriſt? Have I renounced my own righteouſneſs, my beloved ſins, and all Chriſt's enemies? Do I mourn for the injuries done to Chriſt by myſelf and others, and rejoice when his intereſt and kingdom proſper in the world? Do I mourn for Chriſt's departure, and the withdrawing of his Spirit from ordinances, or from my own ſoul? Do I thirſt for more holineſs in heart and life, and for greater conformity and likeneſs to the glorious Bridegroom? Then I may expect his viſit and return will be comfortable to me, and I may rejoice in the view and expectation of it, and anſwer Chriſt, when he ſaith, Rev. xxii. 20. "Surely I come quickly; Amen, even ſo come, Lord Jeſus" Is my Forerunner now gone away? Let me follow him as cloſely and ſpeedily as I can: Let me follow him in the way of faith, in the the way of obedience, in the way of ſuffering, in the way of patience, prayer, reſignation, deadneſs to the world, heavenly-mindedneſs, &c.

MEDITATION XXIII.

From Hoſ. ii. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever.*

ABIGAIL thought herſelf highly honoured, by David's propoſing to match with her: But much more honoured are we, apoſtate ſinners of Adam's family, by the eternal Son of God his propoſing to match with us, and courting us ſo earneſtly; when he neglected angels, that ſeemed to be a fitter match for him, in reſpect of the ſuperior dignity of their nature. Yet all theſe he would paſs by, and match with worms! O how amazing is this ſtep! that the heavenly Bridegroom, whoſe kingdom is mighty, his riches infinite, and his beauty ſurpaſſing; that he ſhould chuſe a bride

naturally polluted, deformed, uncomely, and black as hell! and that he ſhould ſeek her through a ſea of blood, through the pains of death, the horrors of the grave, and the torments of hell! And, after many flights and refuſals, that he ſhould follow her in her wanderings through the wilderneſs of ſin, with his charming invitations, and alluring offers in the goſpel, preſenting her with the rings and bracelets of his precious promiſes and Spirit's conſolations; and all to win her heart, and gain her conſent to him! How aſtoniſhing is it, to ſee this glorious Perſon coming over all objections from the blackneſs, guilt, poverty, and unworthineſs of the bride, ſaying. Though ſhe be black, I'll make her comely through my comelineſs put upon her! Though ſhe be mean, I'll make her noble! Though a ſlave, I'll make her free! Though a fool, I'll make her wiſe! Though a bankrupt, I'll pay all her debt! Come here, law, juſtice, and all her creditors, here full ſatisfaction of all that is due to you, take it, and write her diſcharge? Now, "who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Chriſt's bride! Behold God diſplaying his free love here to the uttermoſt! He never diſplayed his other attributes to the utmoſt; *infinite wiſdom* could have contrived ten thouſand worlds more beautiful than this, and *infinite power* could have produced them. But here *infinite love* and *mercy* hath gone to the utmoſt; a greater demonſtration of his love Chriſt could not give, than by leaving heaven, aſſuming a body, and giving his life for the bride; nay, wading through hell for her, and, in face of all diſcouragements, courting and betrothing her to himſelf for ever!

After many meetings, treaties, and broken tryſts with ſome, the Bridegroom is come again to court a bride, and has ſent his friends in his name to demand her conſent, ſaying, as they did to Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 58. "Wilt thou go with this man?" Poor woman, lad, laſs, wilt thou yield to this glorious Immánuel; many former treaties have been broke off by the devil, the world, unbelief, and an ill heart! Oh, will not the long ſpoken of match hold at length! Miniſters, the Bridegroom's friends, are doing their beſt to draw on another

ther meeting between the parties. Chriſt, I ſee, is content to hold another, and it may be the laſt tryſt he will ſet with many. To ſhew his earneſtneſs, he hath convened his friends, angels, ſaints, and ambaſſadors, to witneſs the ſincerity of parties; he hath put on his ſcarlet robes, his garments dipt in blood, to win ſinners hearts; he hath brought the marriage-contract and ſpread it before them, ſaying, "What think ye of its articles and terms? Are ye pleaſed with them? Are ye content to break with ſin and all my enemies? To renounce the world, ſelf-righteouſneſs, and all other lovers? to fall in with the ſelf-denying way of ſalvation through a borrowed righteouſneſs? to accept of me in all my offices? to live wholly upon your Huſband, borrow all of him, and be an eternal debtor to him? to make a ſurrender of your ſoul and body to him, and ſeal a covenant with him at his table? Are you reſolved to be faithful to your Huſband, cleave to him all the days of your life, and be oft looking out for his ſecond coming? And, in the mean time, to be oft commemorating his ſufferings, conflicts, conqueſts, and atchivements, and for that end to be frequently looking on his picture in the ſacrament, with a believing, penitent, and thaknful heart? Now, what is your anſwer? Lay your hand to your heart."

Lord, unworthy as I am, I deſire to go forward through all difficulties, impediments, and diſcouragement, and ſay with Rebekah, when called to anſwer, "I will go with the man:" And with Eſther, "I will go in to the king." Though I be not worthy of him, yet he is worthy to be obeyed that calls me: Though he hath no need of me, yet I have great need of him: Though my diſtance be great, he allows me to creep nearer to him: Though I cannot move of myſelf, yet he is able to draw me, be my clogs ever ſo great: Though my motion be ſmall, yet I will not turn back, but keep my face toward him, and fix my eye on him. As a look hath brought healing, ſo a look hath brought ſtrength; yea, though he ſhould ſeem to frown on me, and chide me away from him; yet, like Jonah, "I will look again towards his holy temple:" Though I have

no worthineſs in myſelf, yet he hath worthineſs enough for me: Though I be a black and uncomely bride, my glorious Huſband can beautify me with his perfect comelineſs put upon me. Therefore I do, with all my heart, accept of him as my Lord and Huſband: Lord, I make choice of thee, and all that is thine; for richer, for poorer, for better, for worſe; for well, for woe; for proſperity, for adverſity: I make choice of thee for all times and conditions, to love, honour, and obey thee, above all. I renounce all other lords or lovers, and will have none but Chriſt: I renounce my own will, and take thy will for my law. I eſteem thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and will hate every falſe way: I ſubmit to all thy providences and dealings with me, and am content to take up thy croſs and follow thee, whitherſoever thou goeſt: I take thy Spirit for my guide, thy word for my rule, thy glory for my ſcope, thy teſtimonies for my counſellors, thy promiſes for my encouragement, thy ſabbaths for my delight, thy people for my companions: Lord Jeſus, I take thee for my life, holineſs for my way, and heaven for my home. And as I accept of thee, and all that is thine; ſo I give up myſelf to thee, and all that is mine, ſoul and body, with all my faculties and affections, ſenſes, and members, to be thy agents and inſtruments; with all my enjoyments to be employed for thy uſe and ſervice.

"I will go with the man," though I ſee him all over wounded, mangled, and bleeding, and his viſage marred with the wounds, ſtripes, and blows, which he got from men and devils. Nay, I ſee him even in this mangled condition, to be fairer than all the ſons of men, and all the ſons of God too; for I ſee him "wounded for my tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for my iniquities, that by his ſtripes I might be healed." I ſee him a match every way ſuitable for me, that can ſupply all my needs: I am a poor dying worm, but he is a living head that can make me live for ever: I am a needy creature all made up of wants, but in him doth all manner of fulneſs dwell: I want grace, but he hath all fulneſs of grace ſuitable for me: I want grace to believe, but he is the Author of faith: I want grace to repent, but he is a

Prince

Prince and Saviour, exalted to give repentance. I want grace to pray, to hear, to communicate, to mortify ſin, bear the croſs, reſiſt temptation, &c. but my Huſband hath all grace to beſtow. O let me be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.

O that I had the true marks of thoſe who are divorced from the law, and married to Chriſt as their Huſband; that I could ſay, I look upon all my doings, in point of acceptance with God, as old rags: I live wholly and freely upon my Huſband, and take all I want from him for nothing: I clothe myſelf with his righteouſneſs, and eſſay the performance of every duty in his ſtrength: I would deſire to live entirely upon his coſt. I have a heart-love to my Huſband, and every thing that belongs to him, and a heart-hatred to ſin, and averſion to every thing that is injurious to him: I am deſirous to pleaſe him in all things; and, out of regard to his dying command, I go to his table, to remember his dying love, and renew my marriage-vows: I delight in my Huſband's company, and preſs for communion with him in all ordinances. His honour is always dear to me, and I am eaſy about my own honour and intereſt in reſpect of his. "Let me decreaſe, but let him increaſe." And in regard the devils reign here, ſin abounds, error and corruption prevail; I am well pleaſed with the thoughts of Chriſt's ſecond coming to pull down ſatan's kingdom, and to conſummate the marriage with me, and all that are eſpouſed to him, and ſay, "Why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haſte, my beloved; even ſo come, Lord Jeſus." O that all the world would love him, exalt him, and ſubmit to him. Many in different places admire him, and ſee matchleſs charms in him, his name to them is as ointment poured forth, his garments ſmell of aloes, myrrh, and caſſia; they have beheld his ſtately goings in the ſanctuary: O that all the world might ſo admire him, and ſubmit to him alſo.

MEDITATION

MEDITATION XXIV.

From Iſa. liii. 8. *For the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken.*

OUR ſins and tranſgreſſions are great and various, and therefore our Surety's ſufferings for them were heavy and manifold: he endured many wounds, bruiſes, chaſtiſements and ſtripes, which would ſtill endear him the more unto us: "For he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed," ver. 5. O who can think on that verſe without ſorrow, or ſpeak of it without tears? He was wounded and bruiſed to death, to ſave us from deadly wounds and bruiſes. And, when dying, he left us his portraiture, with the marks of his wounds, that we might look upon it at his table, and mourn for our ſins which gave him theſe wounds. Oh, can I ſee my dear Saviour all wounded and mangled by my ſins, and not be deeply affected for the tranſgreſſions for which my dear Jeſus was ſtricken! Stricken he was many ways, by many hands, by many rods, by many ſtripes. He was ſtricken by the hand of God, by the hand of men, by the hand of devils: ſtricken by the rod of Moſes, the rod of juſtice, the rod of the Jews, &c. O how early was he ſtricken by the ill uſage he met with from men; being thruſt out, to be born in a foul ſtable and laid in a manger; and ſoon after was he ſtricken by the rod of perſecution and baniſhment, being made to flee his native country for ſafety from Herod. All this he ſuffered for us, becauſe we deſerved to be deprived of all earthly accommodations and comforts, and to be baniſhed from God and heaven for ever.

He was ſtricken by the rod of poverty and pinching ſtraits. Though he was the King of the univerſe, and poſſeſſed all the riches in it, yet, "for our ſakes he became

became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich," 2 Cor. viii. 5. He was not born of a rich empreſs, but of a poor virgin; not in his own houſe, but in another man's: He had no houſe nor foot of ground of his own, to live or lodge in: Though the "foxes had holes, and the birds nefts," yet he that created them, "had not where to lay his head." His diet was oft aſeeking, and commonly very mean, barley-bread and ſmall fiſhes. He had no money to pay his tax, but muſt borrow it from a fiſh of the ſea: He travelled ſtill on foot, except once he rode to Jeruſalem to fulfil a prophecy; and then he had neither horſe nor aſs of his own, but muſt borrow another man's aſs: He had no fine mounting, but the clothes of them that followed him: He had no burial-place of his own, but was laid in another man's; and all this he ſubmitted to for our ſakes. He was alſo ſtricken by the rod of ſore labour and toil, by working at a mechanic trade, until he was thirty years of age; therefore they ſaid, Mark vi. 3. "Is not this the Carpenter?" Man, having eaten the forbidden fruit, was doomed to ſore labour, that he ſhould eat his bread with the ſweat of his brow, Gen. iii. 19. and to this doom our Surety ſubmitted for us. Man broke God's covenant by eating of the tree, therefore his Surety muſt die on a tree. Man idolized a tree, and preferred its fruit to God's favour; therefore his Surety muſt labour in cutting and hewing trees moſt of his time. Man lived a life of ſinning, and therefore Chriſt muſt live a life of labour and ſorrow; he even became a man of ſorrows, Iſa. liii. 3. that we might obtain everlaſting joy and conſolation.

He was ſtricken by mens reproachful tongues, ſcoffs, and mockeries, being called a glutton, wine-biber, deceiver, Samaritan, blaſphemer, a devil; and one in compact with Beelzebub, the prince of devils. They derided him in all his offices, as a Prophet, by bidding him propheſy who ſmote him; as a Prieſt, bidding him ſave himſelf, ſince he pretended to ſave others; as a King, by putting on him a purple robe, a crown of thorns, and giving him a mock ſceptre. Yea, he endured the moſt cruel mockings, and that in the midſt of his

his ſharpeſt ſufferings and ſoul-agonies, when he cried out on the bloody croſs, *Eli, Eli,* &c. O, ſay they, this man calls for Elias, playing on the word *Eli.* It was not out of ignorance or miſtake they ſaid ſo, but out of malice and deriſion; for they underſtood the Hebrew language well enough, and knew he called on God, and that *Eli* ſignified, *My God.* But, in their ſpite, they would repreſent him as an idolater; and when dying, that he prayed not to God, but to ſaints for help. He was ſtricken by the moſt open affronts and indignities from men, by ſpitting in his face, condemning him to die for blaſphemy againſt God, and treaſon againſt Cæſar: By preferring Barrabbas, a murderer, before him, and poſting him between two thieves. Thus the King of glory was deſpiſed and rejected of men for us, Iſa. liii. 3.

He was ſtricken by the ſcourges of platted cords on his back, and with the thorns they drove into his head: That thorny crown was deſigned for torture, as well as deriſion; for, if it had been only to mock him, a crown of ſtraw would have ſerved the purpoſe as well as one of thorns. He was ſtricken by the pincers that pluckt the hair off his cheeks; and by the heavy croſs-tree laid on his bleeding ſhoulders, which he muſt carry to Calvary. He was ſtricken with four big iron nails through his hands and feet, on which his whole weight muſt hang. He was ſtricken with a burning heat and thirſt, which the wrath of God, for our ſins, created in him, and dried him up like a potſherd: This made him cry out, *I thirſt*; yet no wine, no fountain, no creature that he made, muſt relieve him at this time. He was ſtricken by a ſpear thruſt into his ſide, to let out his heart-blood, to be ſure that no life remained. Well, (ſaid our dying Lamb) let my deareſt blood, my heart-blood, go for theſe loſt ſinners, that their ſouls may live and ſing for ever.

He was ſtricken by the ungrateful behaviour of his own diſciples to him: By Judas his betraying and ſelling him for a ſmall ſum, the price of a ſlave: By Peter's denying him, and ſwearing he knew him not, at the temptation of a poor damſel: By all of them forſaking

ſaking him, and leaving him in the midſt of his enemies. Beſides all this, he was ſtricken in his ſoul by the terrible glittering ſword of juſtice, by the curſes of the law, by deſertion from God, by the vials of his wrath poured out on him, which made fearful bruiſes, deep wounds, and wide gaſhes in his ſoul. Oh, our dear Surety was ſtricken till he fell to the ground; was overwhelmed with wrath, and covered with blood. With theſe ſtrokes our mighty Redeemer was thrown down, and broken with breach upon breach, till all the ſea-billows of divine vengeance went over him. Oh, never was there any ſorrow like my dear Saviour's ſorrow, which he ſuffered when ſtricken for my ſins!

Lord, I am aſhamed of the hardneſs and unconcernedneſs of my heart at this moving ſpectacle! Oh, did the dead earth tremble, the hard rocks rend, the graves open, the heavens turn black at the ſight of a dying Jeſus, ſtricken by the ſword of juſtice? And ſhall not my rocky heart tremble and quake, rend and melt for my ſins, that were the cauſe of it? Shall the hiſtory of Joſeph in the pit move me more than that of Chriſt upon the croſs? Shall the news of the tragical death of a friend, or the ſufferings of an acquaintance among the Turks, move me more than the death and ſufferings of the innocent Son of God on my account? Alas, my heart of ſtone will neither break nor melt, till Chriſt turn and look on me, as he did on backſliding Peter. Lord, one look from thee can turn "the rock into a ſtanding water, and the flint into a fountain of water." One blink of the Sun of righteouſneſs can melt the moſt frozen and icy heart in the world.

O how lovely is my ſtricken and bleeding Jeſus! Even when bleeding and mangled by my ſins, I ſee him to be *white and ruddy*, and "the chiefeſt among ten thouſand." Every wound and ſtroke he got, doth ſtill beautify him the more to me, and make my ſoul to cry, O my loving and lovely Jeſus! O how can I ſee him ſubſtituting himſelf in my room, and making himſelf the butt of the envenomed arrows of juſtice, and not

be raviſhed with his love to me, and with the warmeſt affection to him! And, at the ſame time, filled with ſorrow for my ſins, which brought on all his ſtrokes and wounds? Oh my ſins were the thorns that pierced his head, the nails that pierced his hands, and the ſpear that pierced his heart. My ſins preſſed him down, and made him ſweat blood in the garden. My ſoul being exceeding ſinful, made his ſoul exceeding ſorrowful. May I always hate ſin, and ſorrow for it.

MEDITATION XXV.

From Gal. ii. 20. *I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.*

O HOW deſirable an attainment is the exerciſe of true faith upon the great Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, with an appropriating perſuaſion, or ſpecial application to a man himſelf, ſo as to ſay, "I believe and admire his love to the elect in general, and to me in particular: I truſt him with my ſoul, and my eternal ſalvation: I embrace him, and put my whole confidence in him, "who loved me, and gave himſelf for me!" Surely, this is the faith that every one that deſires to obey that great commandment, 1 John. iii. 23. ſhould aim at, and preſs for, as a thing of the laſt moment and conſequence; "O Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief."

Lord, I will not reſt in a general belief and perſuaſion of the mercy of God in Chriſt, and of Chriſt's ability and willingneſs to ſave all that come unto him; but I will apply his blood and righteouſneſs to myſelf in particular, and reſt on him as one that "loved me, and gave himſelf for me." This appropriating faith is neceſſary to my juſtification; for every juſtified perſon applies Chriſt's righteouſneſs to himſelf, ſaying, as in Iſa. xlv. 24. "Surely in the Lord have I righteouſneſs." As the church in general calls him, "the Lord our righteouſneſs, ſo I, in particular, call him "the Lord my righteouſneſs." I make it my daily practice to wrap

wrap up my naked ſoul in this robe, and live by faith upon it. I make perſonal and particular application of the remedy to my ſoul's maladies, and draw virtue from it. This particular appropriation in the actings of faith, is moſt needful for clearing up a believer's evidences, and for filling the ſoul with joy and peace in believing; for overcoming the fears of death, and giving comfort at a dying hour. And, particularly, it contributes greatly to the ſoul's comfortable approach to the holy table of the Lord, when it can ſay, "I receive a crucified Chriſt as my Saviour: I go to him as one *who loved me, and gave himſelf for me*; I take the ſymbols, and feed upon his body as broken for me, and on his blood as ſhed for me; and I accept of theſe as an earneſt and pledge of my living and feaſting with my Saviour for ever."

A crucified Chriſt, with all his purchaſe, is offered to all the hearers of the goſpel: For Chriſt in the word, and by his miniſters in the goſpel-offer, ſpeaks to all and every one of them; yea, ſpeaks to every ſinner, man and woman in particular, as though he called them by name and ſirname. And every man is bound to take the call and offer home to himſelf, as if he were ſo named, and believe that Chriſt ſtands at his door and knocks, ſaying, If you, or any man, will open to me, I will come in. "The promiſe is to you, and to all that are afar off," even to all the ends of the earth, and to the ſtout-hearted: to all the ſons of men, to every creature, to them that have no money, to the poor, maimed, blind, naked, wretched, and miſerable, and to whoſoever will come: "To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent." Chriſt doth beſeech you to be reconciled, and to beware of coming ſhort of the promiſe, by unbelief; ſuch a promiſe as that, "Whoſoever believeth on the Son ſhall not periſh, but have eternal life:" And that, "him that cometh to me, I will in no ways caſt out:" Beſides many others; John iii. 16.—vi. 37. Rev. iii. 17. 18. 20.—xxii. 17. Prov. viii. 4. Iſa. xlv. 22.—xlvi. 12.—lv. 1. Mark xvi. 15. Luke xiv. 21. 22. 23. Acts ii. 39—iii. 26.—xiii. 26. 47. 2 Cor. v. 20. Heb. iv. 1.

Now, ſeeing the goſpel-call and offer is given to every one, faith, which is the echo of the goſpel-call, muſt needs receive an offered Chriſt, and ſalvation through him, with particular application to the ſoul that believes. As Chriſt offers himſelf, and his purchaſe, to every ſoul in particular; ſo faith appropriates Chriſt to the ſoul itſelf in particular. And indeed, the life and ſweetneſs of faith lies in this appropriation and applicatory act, when the ſoul is helped to ſay, with Thomas, "Thou art my Lord, and my God;" and, with the ſpouſe, "My beloved is mine, and I am his;" and, with David, "Thou art my Rock, and the God of my ſalvation." Unbelief would tempt me to put away the goſpel offer from me, ſaying, It doth not belong to me, I am not elected, nor deſigned to ſhare of Chriſt's purchaſe; he did not love, nor die for me. But in regard ſecret things belong to God, my ſalvation is at the ſtake, my need of a Saviour is unſpeakable, and the offer is made to me; I have no time to loſe in diſputing with the devil and unbelief, but I will go to Chriſt on the ground I have. He tells me, He came to ſave ſinners, I am ſure that is my name; he loved enemies, that is my name; he received gifts for the rebellious, that is my name; and now I hear the Maſter calling and inviting me in particular: Therefore, in ſpite of the devil and unbelief, and all my guilt, I'll go forward, and accept of Chriſt as "my Saviour and my King;" I'll truſt him with my ſalvation, and believe "he loved me, and gave himſelf for me, vile and guilty as I am." This eſſay to believe, Lord, I make in thy ſtrength, and in obedience to thy command: But, Oh, my mints are weak and feckleſs! it is only thy Spirit enlightning my mind, and opening up the goſpel-call and promiſe to me, ſaying, "To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent;" that determines me to make particular application of thy love offer, by an acceptable appropriating faith: Let my help come from thee.

Oh, Lord, my ſins are great and numerous; but ſhould I add to them the ſin of refuſing the Remedy, and putting away Chriſt's love and blood offered to me in the goſpel, this would be greater than all the reſt; for ſo I would bring not only my own blood, but the guilt

guilt of the blood of God upon my head. This I dare not do; now my ſoul is at the ſtake; now the Remedy is in my offer; my need of it is great; I cannot delay cloſing with it; yet a little while, and my opportunity is gone; and I muſt change my dwelling for ever; and how can I go any where without my Saviour! Chriſt I muſt have to teach me, to juſtify and ſanctify me, none elſe can do it, on him all my help is laid. How ſhall I go to a communion-table without him? How will I go to death without him? How will I go to a judgment-ſeat without him? Lord, my caſe is deſperate without thee; wherefore I accept of thy offer, I believe thy love, I truſt in thy merits, I apply thy blood, I appropriate thy purchaſe, and cry, "My Lord, and my God." I confide in a ſin-pardoning God, and reſt on his promiſe to me, through Chriſt's blood and merits, for life and ſalvation; and though clouds ariſe, and he ſhould threaten even to ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him, as one "that loved me, and gave himſelf for me."

Object. But doth not the calling ſinners to ſuch appropriating acts of faith, encourage the preſumptuous confidence of hypocrites to call God their God, like Balaam, Num. xxii. 18. and to continue in ſin? *Anſ.* No: theſe goſpel-calls do encourage ſinners to love God, to repent and leave their ſins; for, till we believe, and taſte ſome thing of God's love to us, we cannot love him, nor turn to him, 1 John iv. 19. "We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us." And the abuſe or preſumption of hypocrites muſt not hinder the publiſhing of free goſpel-offers and promiſes. Again, the appropriating faith of believers humbles the creature, deſtroys ſelf-confidence, purifies the heart, draws forth the ſoul in love to God, and hatred to ſin; whereas the preſumption of hypocrites hath no ſuch effects.

It is the duty, then, of every man that hath Chriſt's love-offers tendered to him, to repent and believe the goſpel, to ſee his loſt ſtate in Adam, and his need of Chriſt, to be well-pleaſed with the goſpel-device, receive Chriſt in all his offices, to truſt in him as his Saviour, and thereupon believe that his ſins are forgiven through Chriſt's blood; and ſo perſuade and aſſure himſelf

himſelf that Chriſt is his, that he died for him, and that he ſhall have life and ſalvation through him. This perſuaſion and aſſurance being moſt neceſſary to the ſpiritual life, it is the great duty of every one to preſs forwards, in the acts of faith, until they attain it, faith being ſtill weak and lame without it. But ſeeing many believers have it not always, through prevailing doubts and unbelief, it muſt ſurely belong more to the perfection of faith, than to the eſſence of it. Their caſe is like that of a ſhipwrecked man that hath got hold of a plank; he believes the plank is ſufficient to bear him up, and keep him from ſinking; but the blowing ſtorm, and his own weakneſs, make him doubt if his grip be faſt enough to hold by it. Indeed, Lord, if thou didſt not take faſter grips of me than I do of thee, my weak and ſlippery fingered faith would ſoon let thee go; but I truſt not in my faith, but in thy faithfulneſs; I truſt not in my promiſes to thee, but in thine to me; that thou "wilt never leave me, nor forſake me." Lord, do as thou haſt ſaid; be it to me according to thy word.

MEDITATION XXVI.

From 1 John iv. 19. *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.*

NO reaſon can be given why God loved any of Adam's race, but only becauſe he loved us. But good reaſons can be given why we love God, both becauſe he is infinitely lovely in himſelf, and becauſe he firſt loved us, and before he had any thoughts of love to him. O what is our love, but a ſmall ſtream that flows from and returns again to the ocean of his love! God's love to us is the ſource, the incentive, the motive, and moral cauſe of our love to him. We can never love God, until ſome rays of his everlaſting love break out to us; for, conſciouſneſs of guilt, and fears

fears of wrath, do rather incline us to hate him, and flee from him as an enemy, than to love him, and draw near to him: But the breaking out of the beams of God's ancient and preventing love to us in Jesus Christ, makes way for breaking the enmity of our hearts, and bringing in the heavenly fire of love to him. The serious consideration of God's eternal free love to us, poor, wretched, and unlovely creatures, and his loving us at such a rate, as to seek and court our love at the expence of his Son's blood, is the most powerful motive in the world, to engage and draw out our love to him; and the more we have of the faith or feeling of this love, the warmer still will our love to him be. God's redeeming love, displayed to men, doth obscure all the seeming glories of this world, as much as the meridian sun doth darken candles or smaller fires; and soon convinces us, that there is nothing that deserves our affections but God and Christ. No man, that ever tasted the sweetness of God's love, but finds his heart warmed with love to him again. A forgiven soul cannot read his pardon but with tears of love and joy, and still there is much love where much is forgiven. "We love him, because he first loved us."

Lord, at thy call I go to thy table, to admire and give thanks for God's preventing love vented to man in the council of peace, the covenant of redemption, in the incarnation, the death, the blood, and righteousness of our God-Redeemer. O amazing love! I admire it in the *antiquity* of it; God's love is from all eternity; his thoughts were long set upon man before he had a being. I admire the *freeness* and undeservedness of this love; there was nothing in man to engage his love; he saw nothing in him but poverty, debt, impotency, and deformity; yea, man was so far from deserving any love from God, that he deserved all hatred, as being loathsome and full of enmity; having razed out the image of God, and got Satan's set up in its room! yet even then, God loved him so, as to give his dearly beloved Son to die for him. O, did God love man, when utterly unworthy of his love! and shall we not love God, who infinitely deserves all our affection,

as

as being in himſelf entirely amiable, and altogether lovely; and likewiſe as affectionate to us, as he is lovely in himſelf! Lord Jeſus, I admire the ſtrength and ardency of thy love! Many waters of affliction did not quench it; and the floods of wrath, that went over thee, could not drown it! ſtrong was that love that made thee engage, and carried thee through in ſuffering the pains both of the firſt and ſecond death in our ſtead! Oh, I am aſhamed and afflicted for my little love to thee! I marvel at the conſtancy and ſteadfaſtneſs of thy love; that it continues firm to thy people from everlaſting to everlaſting; and that it is never altered by all the unkind returns, provocations, and ingratitude thou meets with from them! I wonder at the fruits and effects of thy love! O how great! how ſweet! how numerous! Who can value or ſet them forth? Such as, "Quenching the fire of juſtice, diſarming the law of its curſes, bruiſing the ſerpent's head, paying believers debts, obtaining for them regeneration, pardon of ſin, peace with God, peace with conſcience, peace with angels, adoption into God's family, juſtification, ſanctification, all the graces of the Spirit, audience of prayer, growth in grace, comfort in affliction, a bleſſing on all providences, perſeverance in holineſs, the miniſtry of angels, victory over death, a happy reſurrection, acquittance at the tribunal, the beatific viſion, and everlaſting life!" Who can declare the loving-kindneſs of the Lord? Who can utter his mighty acts? Who can ſhew forth all his praiſe? I may ſooner fathom the depth of the ſea, the breadth of the earth, or the height of heaven, than meaſure the love of God in Chriſt; for it paſſeth knowledge?

Oh, how little do we love him, that loved us firſt, and loved us at ſuch a rate! Nay, how unthankful are we for all the inſtances and fruits of his matchleſs love! How unkind are the returns we make to him for it? "Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid" at the ingratitude of men! How little do we think on redeeming love, and upon the propitiation provided by God for our ſins! How little do we ſpeak of this love, or recommend it to thoſe who know it not!

How

How do the ſmall trifles, and little nothings of this world, get more room in our hearts, than Chriſt's glorious purchaſe! How little pains are we at to ſecure an intereſt in the bleſſed fruits of his love! How unwilling are we to go into the terms of redeeming love, to renounce a covenant of works, ſelf-righteouſneſs, darling ſins, beloved idols! &c. How averſe are we to renounce the world, deny ſelf, and to be debtors wholly to free-grace! How inclinable are we to ſatisfy conſcience after the commiſſion of ſin, by our own doings, confeſſions, mournings, reſolutions, &c. without going to the propitiation provided by the love of God! How great is the liking we have to ſin, that killed the Lamb of God! How can we ſay, we love God that loved us firſt, when we hug his enemy in our boſom! "O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears," that I might weep and mourn day and night for the ungrateful requitals of the ſons of men, for the preventing love of God in Chriſt, and the amazing inſtances of it!

O that I could ſay on good ground, and from the bottom of my heart, I love him that firſt loved me. Surely a ſincere love to God and Chriſt would be a ſure evidence of God's eternal love to me: O that I had the marks of this love, and could ſay, "My meditations of him are ſweet:" I place my happineſs in his favour, and the comfort of all ordinances in his preſence: I rejoice in the flouriſhing of his kingdom, and abhor every thing that is injurious to him: I eſteem Chriſt the Mediator, and gift of God, as moſt precious, with every thing that belongs to him: I fall heartily in with the device of redeeming love for ſaving ſinners, and ſtudy the life of faith on the Son of God. I renounce my own righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and deſire always to ſay, "In the Lord Jeſus have I my righteouſneſs and ſtrength." Were this the language of my heart, I might appeal to himſelf, and ſay, "Thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee," and deſire to render thee love for love.

It would be a great ſhame for believers, if they did not love him that firſt loved them, when they were ene-

mies to him! Surely they cannot be believers without love to him. O for greater and warmer love to him that firſt loved us! Love is the great qualification of the ſaints above; the more love we have, the liker heaven we are, and the meeter to dwell in it. Were it poſſible there could be a man in heaven without love, he would reckon the place a hell, and the work a torment to him. It is love that makes ſpiritual and heavenly work delightful; hence love is ſaid to be the fulfilling of the law. If the love of God be in the heart, the law of God is there alſo, and the ſoul is inclined to all holy obedience. O may the love of God in Chriſt conſtrain me to live to him that died for me. Have I ſeen the aſtoniſhing love of God in parting with his dear Son to ſave me? O let that love conſtrain me to part with all my ſins and idols for him. Have I ſeen the dear Son's amazing love in bleeding to death on the curſed tree, to ſave me from lying in hell for ever? O let me never again wittingly walk in the road that leads to it. Have I ſeen him ſtruggling in an agony to open heaven's gates for me? O let me never turn my back on heaven, and tell him thereby he might have ſaved his labour. O let his boundleſs love warm my heart more and more with love to him! May the charms of his love triumph over all the charms of ſin's pleaſures and ſatan's devices, and kindle ſuch a fire of love in my heart, as will burn up all my luſts like ſtubble. Amen.

MEDITATION XXVII.

From Pſal. cxxvi. 5. *They that ſow in tears, ſhall reap in joy.*

THE ſowing time of God's people is all here, but their reaping time is but partly here, and far more fully hereafter. Here they ſow very much in tears, there is need for it; this ſeedtime is the moſt promiſing of any. Men love a dry ſeed-time, but God loves wet ſeed-times beſt: A wet ſowing time doth promiſe a harveſt of joy, whereas a dry one portends a harveſt of ſorrow. "Wo

to

to them that laugh now, they ſhall weep." If men do not begin with tears, they ſhall end with them; if they weep not now, they ſhall weep and wail and gnaſh their teeth hereafter. Godly weeping is a good ſign of ſpiritual life. If a child, when born, was heard cry, it is reckoned a legal proof of its living; but if not, it is accounted ſtill-born or dead. Alas, the number of ſtill-born children in the church is great! few are heard cry, or ſeen weep, in a godly ſort, if compared with thoſe who do not. There be many who pour out tears on worldly occaſions, but few on ſpiritual accounts. If a child die, we can mourn and weep over him, but who mourns for Chriſt as for an only ſon? Who weeps for ſin that pierced him? Oh, how little are we affected with the ſufferings of our dear Redeemer! Our ears are ſo accuſtomed to the hearing of Chriſt's love, his agonies, his wounds, his blood, his death, that they are become words of a common ſound, and make little impreſſion on us, though they be the moſt awful and moving things that ever the world heard of. Thou, Lord, art preſent at ſacraments, thou obſerveſt our tears, and comeſt with thy bottle to receive and preſerve them; but, Oh, how empty is it of tears, for the moſt part, of goſpel-hearers! and how few are the tears which are dropt into it by communicants themſelves!

Lord, I am aſhamed of the hardneſs and unconcernedneſs of my heart, and the woful dryneſs of my eyes! Shall the rocks about Jeruſalem rend ſooner at Chriſt's ſufferings than my rocky heart? Shall others weep and ſow in tears, when Chriſt's wounds and blood are ſet before them, and I continue ſtupid and hardened? Shall the hiſtory of Joſeph in the pit move my heart more than that of Chriſt upon the croſs! Lord, look upon my ſtony heart with pity, look it into ſtreams of penitential tears, give me ſuch a look as thou gaveſt Peter when he denied thee, a look that may cauſe me weep, and weep bitterly at the remembrance of my ſins that pierced thee. If I have not openly denied my Saviour, ſurely I have ſhamefully forgot him, and forſaken him in my heart: I have had a deep hand in all

his ſufferings. When my dear Lord was in the garden ſweating blood, neither Jew nor Gentile, Judas nor Pilate, were there to cauſe it; but Oh, my unbelief, my pride, my carnality, my hypocriſy, my ſinful words and actions were there, and with their weight preſſed him to the ground, and brought that fearful agony and ſweat upon him. My diſſimulation was the traitor's kiſs, my ambition the thorny crown, my drinking up iniquity like water the portion of gall and vinegar; my want of tears cauſed him ſhed both tears and blood, my forſaking God made him to be forſaken of God, my ſoul's being exceeding guilty made his ſoul exceeding heavy! Oh, what means then the hardneſs of my heart, and dryneſs of my eyes, when theſe things are ſet before me! Is it that weeping is deſigned for me hereafter, where tears ſhall never be dried up! Lord ſave me, for Chriſt's ſake, from hell's tears, and give grace to prevent them, by ſowing in tears now in the proper ſeaſon.

So long as I am in the valley of tears, there are many reaſons for ſowing the ſeed of tears. I ſee many grounds for them, may a glance of them be the means of melting my heart, and filling my eyes with tears. *Tears* for my woful apoſtaſy from God in Adam, whereby I am baniſhed from God, have loſt his image and countenance, and am fallen under his wrath and curſe. *Tears* for the woful corruption of my nature, my enmity againſt God, and the manifold plagues of my heart; as *atheiſm*, *ignorance*, *pride*, *unbelief*, *hardneſs*, *hypocriſy*, *formality*, &c. *Tears* for the ſins of my life, open and ſecret, of omiſſion and commiſſion, of light and ignorance, which are more in number than the hairs of my head, and many of them very heinous, becauſe of ſeveral aggravations; of all which I may have an affecting view, by reading our larger Catechiſm upon the ten commandments. *Tears* upon the remembrance of Chriſt's love, in ſuffering and dying in my room, to waſh away my ſins, and ſave me from hell. Surely the thoughts of this love may inflame the coldeſt breaſt, melt the hardeſt heart, and make the drieſt conſtitution run down with tears. It was this that made Mary Magdalene's eyes guſh out ſo plentifully with tears

tears of love and joy as were enough to wash her Saviour's feet. *Tears* for the abuse of God's fatherly goodness, mercy, and patience towards me a sinful hell deserving creature: This consideration melted the prodigal's heart, and made him cry, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." David's undeserved kindness made even the hard-hearted Saul to lift up his voice and weep, and will not God's kindness, which is infinitely greater and freer, make me drop some silent tears at his holy table? *Tears*, because of the frowns of my heavenly Father, the tokens of his displeasure, his chastisements, and even his chidings and shaking the rod at me: These will melt the heart of a child whose nature is kindly and ingenuous, while the stubborn will stand it against many strokes. David, though a man of the greatest valour against his enemies; yet when he saw God was angry with him in Absalom's rebellion, he wept like a child before the enemy while going up Olivet, 2 Sam. xv. 36. and seemed to have no courage at all. Again, I ought to sow in *tears* for the the dishonours done to God by the sins of others; and especially when damnable heresies and blasphemies are vented against God. And likewise *tears* for the miseries and perishing condition of others. And especially *tears* of sympathy with God's people in affliction. For I read of Christ himself, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Jeremiah, and other saints sowing such tears. Well then may this world be called a valley of tears.

Besides all these, it is well-pleasing to God when Christians sow tears of tenderness in renewing covenant with him, in prayer, in hearing the word in communicating and commemorating the death and sufferings of Christ for their sins. This last is a special season for sowing tears, according to Zech. xii. 10. O shall Christians be more sparing of their tears for Christ, than Christ was of his blood for them? We cry out against the Jews and Romans as hard-hearted men for piercing Christ, and being unconcerned at his sufferings. But what softer are our hearts, if we can see how our sins put him to death, and not be grieved nor weep. Lord,

send

weep. Lord, ſend thy Spirit to touch my heart, and then it will melt into a ſtream of tears for ſin, that curſed thing that butchered the Lamb of God. O let this be my weeping time, and ſeed time of tears, that hereafter I may reap in joy. Alas, my ſeed-time is ſcrimp and inſignificant, O let not my harveſt be proportioned to it. Lord, though I have not tears enough with Mary to waſh thy feet, yet thou haſt blood enough to waſh my feet, my heart, my hands, my tears, and all my duties, and to make me and them acceptable and ſavoury to God, ſo that I may reap in joy with his people above, and ſtand there as a monument of free grace for ever.

Many, after ſowing the precious ſeed of tears at communion-ſeaſons, have even had their reaping times here below, as an earneſt and firſt-fruits of the full harveſt above. Lord, make me acquaint both with the ſowing and reaping of penitent believers in this world, that I may have good hope through grace, of ſharing with them in the harveſt of glory hereafter, even the full enjoyment of God in heaven, eternal communion with the glorious Trinity, with the ſaints and holy angels. Let me know what it is, after a ſeed time of tears, to reap even in ordinances here below, the clearing of my evidences of grace, and the evidences of my intereſt in Chriſt, and in the well-ordered covenant. Let me reap the lifting up of the light of thy countenance upon me, which will put more joy in my heart than worldlings have when they reap corn and wine in the greateſt plenty. Let me ſee my name written in heaven before I go thither, that my paſſage may be joyful in the midſt of tears. Let me reap even here new ſupplies of grace, ſtrength to bear croſſes, and reſiſt temptations; give me gracious returns of prayer, and victory over my corruptions, that I may ſing with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxxxviii. 3. "In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me; and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul."

MEDITATION

MEDITATION XXVIII.

From Rev. i. 5. *Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.*

THE love of Chriſt in becoming man, and ſhedding his blood to ranſom and ſave ſinners of mankind, will be the eternal ſong of the redeemed above, and why ſhould not they begin this ſong here below? Never was there ſuch matter for ſongs of praiſe as the unfathomable love of Jeſus; his name is love; and therefore it is to me as ointment poured forth. I'll remember his love more than wine. His nature is love; his words and actions were love; he preached and practiſed love; he lived in love, was ſick of love, and died for love. O what thoughts ſhould I have of this free and undeſerved love of the glorious Son of God, who was intreated by no man, and even hated of all men; yet in his free love intreats and undertakes for man, ſaying, Though he be my enemy, I'll be both his Surety and Sacrifice, I'll drink the cup of wrath, be made ſin and a curſe for him, I'll pour out all my blood and die for him. O how ſhall I ſpeak of this aſtoniſhing love to thy enemies? To have ſpared our lives had been great mercy, but to give thy life for ours, is love unſpeakable. Oh! Lord, thou haſt found me in my enmity, and yet loved me! When my hand was lifted up againſt thee, thy arms were open to embrace me! Nay, thou haſt opened thy loving heart to ſhelter rebels, who trode thee under foot! Thy heart burned with love to them who cruelly pierced it! Thy bowels yearned toward thoſe that raked in them with bloody hands! Surely eternity itſelf will be ſhort enough to celebrate the praiſes of our glorious Immanuel, who loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood. Worthy is our ſlain bleeding Lamb of eternal hallelujahs from men and angels. Lord, fit my heart for theſe new ſongs.

O never was there ſuch a miracle of condeſcending love to the ſons of men, as this of the eternal Son of God, his becoming man to ſuffer hell for them, and pour out his blood to waſh them from ſin that kindles hell-fire againſt them. Glory to the Lamb for his fire-quenching blood, and for his preventing love, that kept me from feeling of this fire! O how would this love have affected me, if juſtice had ſent me to hell, and kept me there one year, or one month, or but one day! Surely, one day in hell would have made me prize and praiſe redeeming love and redeeming blood at another rate than now I do. Or had I ſeen the damned in their miſery, deſpairing and without hope! Or, had I ſeen my agonizing Saviour in the garden ſweating blood for me; or ſeen him dying on the croſs pouring it out at five big wounds to the very laſt drop, to waſh away ſin! O would not I then have valued the great remedy and ſalvation he now tenders to me! And is not all this which now I hear in the word, and ſee repreſented in the ſacrament, as true, as real and certain, as if I had ſeen it with my eyes?

And now when I go to behold Chriſt dying and bleeding in this holy repreſentation, even the Lamb of God ſacrificed and ſlaughtered for my ſins; Lord, touch my heart that it may be ſuitably affected with the ſight, ſo as intenſely to love my bleſſed Saviour, and to hate my curſed ſins. O how ſhould I, at this occaſion, be covered with ſhame and loathe myſelf, who have both procured the death of Chriſt by ſin, and ſinned againſt his death, by ſlighting his blood and neglecting his great ſalvation! Oh! I am chargeable both with the guilt of Chriſt's blood, and of murdering my own ſoul. O pardon and "deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, O God, thou God of my ſalvation."

My ſins have indeed ſhed the blood of Chriſt, but, Lord, impute not the guilt, but the merit of this blood to me. Lord, what profit is there in my blood? Surely the leaſt drop of thy dear Son's blood is of more value than a ſea of mime. A whole ſea of it cannot waſh away one ſin, but Lord thou calleſt me to look unto the Lamb's blood that takes away the ſins of the world.

Oh,

Oh is not this blood more powerful to waſh me, than my ſins are to defile me! Is not its virtue as freſh ſtill as when it dropped from his wounds on the tree, or in the day when it cleanſed three thouſand at once? Is not thy Son's blood a ſufficient ſatisfaction for all my ſins, a full price for my redemption! O my ſoul, thou art now near the bleſſed remedy for thy guilt and pollution, this is the only well of ſalvation and fountain of life! O canſt thou ſee Chriſt's blood running, and not deſire to be bathed in it! Now the cleanſing and healing ſtreams run on both ſides of the table, now let me apply and live, let me bring all my plagues and ſores to the ſtreams, my blind eyes, my deaf ears, my weak hands, my feeble knees, my hard heart, my cold affections, my unbelieving and doubting mind, my leprous and unclean ſoul. Lord, this blood has waſhed away the plagues, ſpots and ſtains of many thouſands, who are now praiſing the Lamb for it: O let me be joined to the number, that I may alſo ſing to him that loved and waſhed me.

O bleeding Lamb, "if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean." O let that blood, which guſhed from thy heart and ſide, but drop on my ſoul, and it will cleanſe me from all ſin. And when thou art pleaſed to come to me in the ſacrament in ſtreams of blood, O raiſe me up, that I may meet thee with ſtreams of tears, tears of repentance, love and gratitude. O let me not be more ſparing of my tears for Chriſt, than he was of his blood for me. David's kindneſs made even a hard-hearted Saul lift up his voice and weep, and will not Chriſt's kindneſs, which is infinitely greater, make me drop at leaſt ſome ſilent tears?

O how dreadful a thing muſt it be to reject this remedy! Surely juſtice will not ſpare them that trample under foot the blood of the Son of God. If juſtice was inexorable, when he himſelf prayed, "If it be poſſible let this cup paſs:"—how will he ſpare me, or hear the cry of thoſe who reject his blood and ſacrifice? How is it poſſible that the cup of wrath can paſs from them who do it! No: they muſt drink it for ever themſelves! Lord, ſave me from rejecting this blood. "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

MEDITATION XXIX.

From Luke xv. 18, 19. *Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon, make me as one,* &c.

FATHER:—Ah! I may be aſhamed to call thee ſo, conſidering what a diſobedient and unthankful child I have been. I am a moſt wretched prodigal: I left thy houſe and preſence, and went into a far country; far from thee, my bliſs and happineſs. But now, Father, behold me, deſiring to come back, as a poor penitent, mourning, and returning prodigal. I come from a far country indeed; I come from the land of ſin and darkneſs; I come from the frontiers of hell, from the very borders of the burning lake! Ah, fooliſh creature that I am! how have I forſaken thee, the Fountain of living waters! How fond have I been of broken ciſterns, and in love with filthy puddles. O the baſeneſs, the diſingenuity, the ingratitude that I have been guilty of! I have reſiſted thy power, deſpiſed thy wiſdom, undervalued thy goodneſs! Father of mercies, I now ſee what an evil thing and bitter it is to forſake the Lord. Holy Lord Jeſus, I now ſee what indignities I have done againſt thee! Thy bleſſed body was dreadfully torn with nails upon the croſs, and thy precious blood inhumanely ſpilt by thy crucifiers! But O have not I occaſioned more grief and ſorrow to thee by my manifold ſins againſt light and love? They crucified thee but once, but I have crucified thee day by day! They crucified thee, becauſe they knew thee not; but I have known thee, what thou art in thyſelf, the Lord of glory; and what thou art to me, a tender and merciful Father:—Yet I have continued to crucify thee afreſh. O Holy Spirit, I have reſiſted thy ſtrivings, quenched thy motions, demoliſhed thy work, and put thee away grieved. But, Lord, I condemn my folly, and ſee my miſery. O what have I gained by offending thee? Nothing

Nothing but ſhame and confuſion, fear, trembling and horror! O what fruit have I in theſe things whereof I am now aſhamed!

But, Father, I have heard of thy compaſſions to the guilty, when they confeſs and forſake, and turn to thee: wherefore, though I am aſhamed like the publican to lift up my eyes to heaven; yet let me, with humble Magdalane, come behind thee weeping, and waſh thy feet with my tears, and kiſs them. And let me hear the news of pardon from thy mouth. Thou cameſt, Lord, not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance; and of theſe I am chief. Lord, I am full of diſeaſes, full of wounds, full of plague-ſores, full of weakneſs and infirmities, full of ſins and pollutions. Here, Lord, is work for thy ſtrong hand, work for thy wonder-working blood: O ſtretch forth thy hand, and ſave. "Father, I am no more worthy to be called thy ſon, make me as one of thy hired ſervants." And thou knoweſt no hire, no wages will ſatisfy me but thyſelf; Lord, give me thyſelf, be thou my exceeding great reward.

Lord, I am ſo vile a creature, that I may fear to come and preſent a petition to thee upon the knee, and far more to come and ſit down with thee at thy holy table: If John Baptiſt, a ſaint of the firſt magnitude, thought himſelf not worthy to ſtoop down and looſe the latchet of thy ſhoes, ſhall I, who am laden with ſins, adventure to that holy feaſt, where angels wait as miniſtering ſpirits? But, Lord, in thy compaſſion receive me, that comes not to excuſe, but to accuſe myſelf, with eyes caſt down, ſmiting on my breaſt, with the publican, "Lord, be merciful to me a ſinner." Thou didſt graciouſly accept of the publican's prayer, of Mary Magdalane's tears, the faith of the thief on the croſs, the repentance of Peter, and of thoſe that crucified thee. By theſe inſtances of thy mercy, I am encouraged to draw near to thee: O ſend me not away empty, leſt I faint by the way; but ſatisfy my needy ſoul with the food of thy heavenly banquet, that I may receive ſpiritual ſtrength and nouriſhment to eternal life.

Lord, hear my cry, and hide not thy face from me: When Manaſſeh cried to thee, thou hadſt reſpect to his prayer: When the Ninivites humbled themſelves before thee, thou waſt intreated; yea, thou inviteſt the moſt crimſon and ſcarlet-coloured ſinners, to come and reaſon with thee, and aſſures them, thou wilt caſt out none that come. Many thouſands, who have experienced the truth of thy word, are, at this hour, ſinging thy praiſes, and exalting thy free grace. Lord, do thou make me alſo a monument of thy free grace to all eternity.

Ah, I may be aſhamed to ſpeak of mercy and grace, who have ſo long abuſed thy grace, and trampled on the blood that ſhould ſave me. O that I could mourn and weep all my life for it. O what ſhall I do with my ſtony heart, that will not break and melt for abuſing God's mercy, and trampling Chriſt's blood! O ſhall I mourn and weep for a dead corpſe, or a departed friend, and not mourn for a dead heart, or for God's departing from me! Shall the dear Son of God weep, ſweat, and bleed for us; and we not weep for ourſelves, or for our ſins that pierced his head with thorns, his hands with nails, and his ſide with a ſpear, and his heart with ſorrows. Lord Jeſus, I look to thee for a penitent heart, ſeeing thou tells me, thou art exalted for this very end, to give repentance to Iſrael.

"Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" And what am I, the unworthieſt of men, that thou ſhouldſt call me to ſit with thy children at thy table, who am unworthy as a dog to creep under it; yea, calleſt me to eat the bread of angels, who am not worthy to eat the bread of men. Amazing love! that God ſhould court thoſe to obedience, whom he can peremptorily command to it; and, in caſe of diſobedience, puniſh inſtantly in hell; that he ſhould take poor ſlaves, condemned to the priſon of hell, and make them crowned kings in heaven; that he ſhould not only be willing to dwell in fleſh, but alſo to give us his fleſh for our food; that he ſhould not only ſave us from hell, but even leave his throne in heaven, and loſe his life on earth, to enthrone us in his kingdom! theſe are prodigies

digies of love, which ſhould engage us to love our Saviour, and mourn for ſin while we live. Lord Jeſus, pity a relenting, returning prodigal, take him home, and make him thy ſervant for ever. It is highly juſt, that I ſhould offer up myſelf a living ſacrifice to my Redeemer, who offered up himſelf a dying Sacrifice for my redemption.

MEDITATION XXX.

From Song. i. 4. *We will remember thy love*——

I GO, bleſſed Jeſus, at thy call to remember thy love at thy holy table; thy words have an awful ſound in my ears, "Do this in remembrance of me." I ſee much in them: In obedience to them I'll *do this* in remembrance of thy dwelling in fleſh; in memory of thy love that carried thee to the manger, to the garden, and to the croſs for me; in memory of the infinite price of thy blood which thou didſt ſhed; in memory of the victory obtained by it over the enemies of my ſoul; in memory of the deliverance from wrath, and the immortal glory thou haſt purchaſed by it for me: Tho' thou didſt die and ly in the grave, yet thy love ſhall ever live in my heart. Glory to thee, thou art now alive in heaven; O come and live with me; let never thy love be one moment out of my view. I bleſs thee for this laſting memorial of thy love.

I look on this ſacrament as no real or proper ſacrifice, as many do, but only as a repreſentation or commemoration of the real ſacrifice Chriſt offered on the croſs. I do no more at the Lord's table, than what Chriſt did at it: Since he offered no ſacrifice at the table, neither do I: He only did commemorate that ſacrifice he was going to offer; and the ſame, and not more do I. If any ſhould ſay that Chriſt offered a real ſacrifice when he inſtituted this ſacrament, then the oblation on the croſs would have been ſuperfluous, becauſe

cauſe ſinners would have been redeemed by that of the ſupper which went before.

Now is the time for a ſolemn commemoration of thy love: Oh, ſhall I be unmindful of thy love at this feaſt, when thou waſt ſo mindful of me at it, made thy teſtament, put me in it, and left me precious legacies to cauſe me remember thee; ſuch as life and light, pardon and peace, righteouſneſs and ſtrength, grace and glory. O how heroic, how generous and free is thy love to ſinful worms! we had done nothing to oblige thee; nothing ſaweſt thou in us to engage thy love to us; but much didſt thou ſee in us to incenſe thee againſt us. When we were without ſtrength, ungodly, ſinners, and enemies, thou lovedſt us, and diedſt for us. "Greater love hath no man than this, to lay down his life for his friends;" but far greater love hath God-man, who laid down his life for his enemies! O what ſhall I think of this love! it had been wonderful love in an angel to have ſtooped to be united to a lump of earth, and therein ſuffer for us, though it could not have paid our debt. But, O my ſoul, here is one more valuable than all the angels in heaven, that has ſtooped to do it! "The word was made fleſh and dwelt among us! when I was like Iſaac bound on the altar, he freely offered himſelf to be made a ſacrifice to ſatisfy juſtice for me, "Father, (ſaid he,) lo I come, to do thy will I take delight!"

Remember this love, O my ſoul, the Son of God is become the Son of man for thee, that thou mighteſt be raiſed to the dignity of a ſon of God? he that was infinitely rich, for my ſake became poor, that I, a poor naked creature, might become rich and well clothed. How can I look on the incarnation and birth of my Redeemer, and not remember his love with wonder? Can I behold the manger his bed, and not adore the love that brought him to ly in it? O how low were the circumſtances of the Heir of heaven, when he came to ſojourn on earth; who had neither a bouſe to live in, nor an eſtate to live upon, but muſt be ſubſiſted by the hoſpitality of others; and frequently his fare was very mean! Amazing prodigy of divine love! God

ſtoops

ſtoops to dwell in fleſh, and gives us his fleſh to feed upon in the ſacrament! He not only pardons our ſins, and ſaves us from hell; but leaves his throne in heaven, loſes his life on earth, and wades through hell, to enthrone us in his kingdom, and make us crowned kings for ever. Bleſſed be the Lord that gives me a communion-ſabbath to remember this love! what ſhall I render to thee for it? A day of glad-tidings! thou haſt often on ſuch a day viſited the earth, and watered it, and made it rich with thy ſhowers! May thy grace and Spirit drop on us this day, like rain on the mown graſs.

Lord, I am not worthy to touch the threſhold of thy houſe, and yet thou calleſt me to thy table! Not worthy to ſtand among thy ſervants, and yet thou wouldſt have me ſit with my Redeemer! Not worthy to ly at thy footſtool, and yet thou wouldſt make my heart thy throne! Not worthy to eat the bread of men, and yet thou calleſt me to eat the bread of angels! O love worthy to be remembred to all generations! Lord enlighten my eyes, and give me a clearer view of thy love, than ever I got; and while I am muſing on it, let the fire burn; O make my heart burn within me with love to him that loved us.

O my ſoul, conſider the greatneſs of Chriſt's love in the cup he drank for thee! how legible is it in his tears and prayers, his groans and cries, his agony and ſweat, his wounds and blood, and all for us. O let this matchleſs love beget in me the warmeſt love and affection to him that loved us! O let the fire of Chriſt's love burn up my luſts and worldly love like ſtubble; and remove the coldneſs of my heart to him! O that I could weep bitterly that I cannot bring this vile heart of mine to love the Lord Jeſus more! O ſhall I throw away my affections upon every worthleſs object, and yet have none for the lovelieſt object in the whole creation of God; and yet one that would needs die for me, to become my Ranſom, Sacrifice and Atonement! Is it the character of thoſe who are Chriſt's ſpouſe? Is it the character of the whole army of martyrs, and of every believer, to love Chriſt? and ſhall not I love him too?

too? O the virgins love thee, the upright love thee; and every one of them cry, "O thou whom my ſoul loveth;" and ſhall not I join theſe chaſte lovers? Or ſhall I be expoſed to the terrible fate of thoſe who want love to Chriſt? 1 Cor. xvi. 22. "If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be an anathema, maranatha." O that I could expreſs my love to him in adorations and praiſes, in deſiring his preſence, loving his members, promoting his kingdom on earth, and longing to be with him for ever.

MEDITATION XXXI.

From Iſa. liii. 5. *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions.*

HOW amazing is the love of God to fallen man, in taking a body to be pierced and wounded for him!—Man did caſt off the image of his Maker, and became a rebel to and run-away from God: and, behold, his Maker takes on him man's image to reſtore him again to favour: yea, aſſumes our nature, when at the loweſt, that ſo he might ſigh, groan, grieve, weep, ſorrow, ſweat, bleed and die for undone man; and he did this, to raiſe him from his miſerable ſtate, to a happier condition than he was in before his fall. Had not God become man, we could not have enjoyed him ſo nearly, ſo familiarly as we may do now. The enjoyment of God as a Redeemer, a Huſband, a Brother, is another manner of enjoyment of him than of God as a Creator. Though we ruined ourſelves, and fell under wrath, yet God, by the incarnation, has recovered us, and made us up far above all we had to loſe. But ere this be done, he muſt not only be man, but he muſt be wounded for and by man's ſins; yea, wounded to death, and crucified, before man could be raiſed up to live with God.

Many, yea, innumerable were the wounds my God-Redeemer received for me; as, by the thorns that pricked his head, by the pincers that plucked his hair, by the ſcourge that tore and furrowed his back; beſides

like the five big wounds made in his hands and feet by the four nails, and in his ſide by the ſpear; and the many wounds given his ſoul by the curſes of the law. Now, all theſe wounds are opened as ſo many mouths, to call us to flee into them for ſafety from the ſword of juſtice. Now thoſe wounds were unſpeakably painful, being envenomed by our ſins. Crucifying, in itſelf, was an exceeding painful death; the four big nails whereon the body hung, pierced the moſt ſinewy and nervous parts of the body, and conſequently moſt ſenſible of pain: And hence the Romans expreſſed torment by a word borrowed from the croſs; and *make cruciate* ſignify to *torment*. Thus was our innocent Saviour wounded on the croſs, cruciate or tormented, and all to ſave us from eternal torments.

Aſtoniſhing ſight! The eternal Son of God, whom all the angels worſhip, wounded to death, hung by nails on a croſs, tortured and racked for ſeveral hours; and in the mean time, loaded with reproach and ſcorn from thoſe he died for! Never ſuch a ſight as this! It ſtruck terror in the whole creation. The ſun hid its face, and could not behold it, the vail of the temple rent in twain, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the dead were moved, and their graves opened: And even his enemies were ſtruck with amazement, and made to ſhrink, and ſay, "Truly this was a righteous perſon, this was the Son of God." O my ſoul, employ all thy faculties, all thy thoughts, to ſtudy, pore, and penetrate into this awful ſubject, it deſerves the profoundeſt regard and cloſeſt attention: Hence the great apoſtle determined to ſtudy and know nothing but it.

This amazing tragedy ought to create in me the greateſt abhorrence of ſin, the cauſe of it. Never can ſin appear more exceeding ſinful, and hateful, than in the wounding and crucifying of the Son of God. Our tranſgreſſions were the nails and ſpear that wounded his ſacred body, and the ſword that pierced his ſoul. Theſe were the Judas that betrayed him, the ſoldiers that bound him, blindfolded and mocked him, the Piſate that condemned him, the executioners that nailed him to the curſed tree: It was our ſins that put the

ſword in his enemies hands. He became a curſe for us. All the deriſion, mockery, and contempt; all the pain, ſuffering and ſorrow he endured, did proceed from our ſins; theſe brought him to the croſs and to the grave. Let us then turn our hatred, and diſcharge our fierceſt indignation againſt our ſins, let them be our averſion and dread for ever; let me always look on ſin, that crucified Chriſt, with horror and trembling. Never ſuch an inſtance of the ſtrictneſs and ſeverity of God's juſtice, and of his abhorrence of ſin, as here! He would not ſpare his own Son, when he ſtood in the room of ſinners, nor ſpare him one ſtripe or wound, when he cried; but let him bleed, and die, till ſin was fully atoned for! Can I ſee this, and not cry, O curſed ſin! Murderer of the Son of God; away with it, away with it; crucify it, crucify it.

Oh my ſoul, ſee the evil of ſin in the glaſs of Chriſt's wounds and ſufferings, in his body and ſoul! Say, O ſin, what haſt thou done! Thou haſt provoked the God of heaven to fiery indignation! Thou haſt killed the Prince of life, turned angels into devils, filled the earth with troubles, and hell with precious ſouls! If any body had killed my father, would I embrace the murderer, or love the dagger that was beſmeared with his blood? But what are all my relations to *my Lord, my love, that was crucified!* O that my eyes were fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night for my ſins that ſlew my Saviour! Oh, ſtony heart, for ſhame, become now like wax, and be melted in the midſt of my bowels! Wo's me that I can grieve no more for my ſins. Let me, at leaſt, revenge my Saviour's death upon my ſins, and ſuffer them no longer to live in me.

How dreadful muſt the guilt of thoſe be who willingly harbour ſin, and delight in the murder of our Lord! It is no leſs than to kiſs the nails, or to hug the ſpear that pierced him. They make that their joy, which made Chriſt a man of ſorrow! They make light of that which made his ſoul heavy unto death. Oh, have I ſeen my Saviour bleeding to death by ſin, and ſhall I live any longer in ſin that wounded him: When a temptation to ſin is preſented, ſhall I ever diſpute any more, whether

whether Chriſt or Barabbas ſhall be preferred? My luſts denied, or my Lord crucified; Whether thoſe ſins ſhall be forſaken by me, that made Chriſt to be forſaken of God? Whether that ſhall be ſweet to me, that was ſo bitter and deadly to him? Oh, was my lovely Jeſus a man of ſorrows all his life, and ſometimes made to ſay, "My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful;" and ſhall not I be ſorry for, and abhor thoſe ſins that cauſed all his ſorrows?

O may the believing views of Chriſt's wounds and ſufferings, which he endured for my ſins, and to ſave me from that wrath which they deſerved; kindle the fire of love in my ſoul to Chriſt. Lord, thou art the God that was wont to anſwer thy people by fire; O pity me, and anſwer my meditations and prayers, by kindling the holy fire of love in my heart, and let that fire put out the impure fire of my luſts and corruptions, and inſpire me with holy zeal and activity in thy ſervice. O did Chriſt freely give himſelf to be a ſin-offering for me; and ſhall not I give myſelf a thank-offering to him? Surely, it is highly reaſonable that I ſhould offer up myſelf a living ſacrifice to my Redeemer, who offered up myſelf a dying ſacrifice for my redemption.

MEDITATION XXXII.

From John vi. 51. *I am the living Bread that came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever.*

CHRIST crucified is our Manna, or heavenly bread, that preſerves the life of the ſoul, and it is only by faith it muſt be received and eaten. Bread is a comprehenſive word, including all things neceſſary for this life; ſo Chriſt, our ſpiritual bread, is a moſt comprehenſive bleſſing, including all we want, ſeeing "he is made of God to us, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption." Again, bread is the moſt neceſſary thing for our life, and the want of it brings the greateſt miſery; ſo Chriſt is the moſt neceſſary bleſſing to the

ſoul, and the want of him makes a man miſerable in time, and through eternity. It is a greater miſery to have no Saviour for the ſoul, than to have no bread for the body. Chriſt alone is the bread that preſerves us from ſoul famine, and nouriſheth us to eternal life; he is the bread of life, the living bread. "Lord, give us evermore this bread."

Bread is called the ſtaff and ſtay of man's life; ſo Chriſt is the ſtaff and ſtay of our ſpiritual life, he upholds our ſouls in life. He is the ſtaff that faint and weary ſouls muſt lean to, in going up through this wilderneſs: Yea Chriſt, our living bread, is a ſtaff to defend us, and to beat off our enemies, and to put all the helliſh hoſts to flight. That was a ſtrange dream of one of the Midianites, Judg. vii. 13. "Behold a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the hoſt of Midian, and ſmote a tent." Strange! a piece of bread to overturn a tent! Behold this dream made good in the ſacrament. The bread there which repreſents Chriſt, when received with faith upon him, will tumble into the hoſt of ſatan and his luſts; thoſe Midianites who vex us with their wiles; ſtrike down their tents, and put them all to flight.

Chriſt is the bread that came down from heaven, of which the Iſraelites manna that God ſent miraculouſly from heaven was an eminent type. That manna was God's free gift to the murmuring and rebellious Iſraelites, to preſerve them from ſtarving in the deſerts where bread could not be had: This manna was a curious grain, that made fine bread, with which God furniſhed them plentifully every morning from the clouds, ſufficient to ſatisfy ſix hundred thouſand men. But Chriſt, our ſpiritual Manna, doth far excel theirs, though he was reſembled by theirs in ſome things. Manna was firſt grinded and beaten, and baken in ovens, before it was made bread for them; and ſo the grain which makes our ordinary bread muſt be threſhed, and grinded betwixt two milſtones, and baken by the force of fire before we eat it: So Chriſt, the Antitype, was threſhed and bruiſed, and grinded betwixt the milſtones of divine juſtice and our ſins, and alſo roaſted by the fire of wrath, that he might be fit bread for

for ſaving the lives of our ſouls, and all this we ſhould call to mind, when we ſee and make uſe of the bread in the holy ſupper.

The Iſraelites manna came down to them with the dew; ſo Chriſt, with the benefits of his purchaſe, comes to us by the dews and influences of the Holy Spirit.—Their manna fell round about their tents, and every man was free to gather it; ſo every man is at freedom to gather our heavenly Manna. The Iſraelites behoved to go out of their tents to gather theirs; ſo God will have us go forth, and be at pains to get our ſpiritual food. God, who rained manna about their tents, could have rained it into their mouths; but he loves not to encourage ſloth in his people, but would have them at all pains to make ſure of Chriſt for their portion. As the Iſraelites gathered daily; ſo we muſt be daily going to Chriſt, and making uſe of him. As they gathered early in the morning; ſo God would have us ſeeking after Chriſt in the morning of our lives.

O how far doth our heavenly Manna excel that of the Iſraelites! Theirs but fed the body, and could not preſerve them from death at laſt; but our Manna feeds the ſoul, and nouriſhes to eternal life, and preſerves all that eat of it from eternal death. Theirs fell not on the ſabbath-day; nor durſt they go to ſeek it on that day; but ours falls every day, and double on the ſabbath; and therefore God calls us to double our diligence, in gathering it on the ſabbath. Their manna continued only in the wilderneſs, and ceaſed when they came to Canaan; but ours continueth for ever, and our fulleſt enjoyment of it is in the heavenly Canaan; therefore all the true Iſraelites long to be there.

O how lamentable is their folly, who ſpend all their time and thoughts in ſeeking bread to their bodies, and are careleſs and indifferent about the bread of life to their ſouls! All their care is to ſupport the clay houſe, but let the ſoul ſtarve that inhabits it. Oh, it is but ſhort time they can enjoy the bread they are ſo concerned for; the bodies they mind ſo much, muſt ſoon be meat for worms, and the ſouls they neglect, a prey for devils!

But,

But, whatever others do, may I be wiſe to provide the living bread for my ſoul, and learn to eat it, and make uſe of it by faith, and eſpecially when I go to the Lord's table: for without faith we can get no nouriſhment, no life, nor ſtrength from this heavenly bread: Faith is the mouth that eats the bread of life, and ſucks honey out of this Rock. Now, the Spirit of God calls faith or believing, an eating, becauſe by it we taſte the ſweetneſs and excellency of Chriſt, and have great ſatisfaction in partaking of Chriſt and his benefits As by eating, our bodies increaſe in ſtrength and ſtature; ſo by believing, our ſouls grow in grace and ſpiritual ſtrength, to run in God's ways. As by eating, the bread incorporates and becomes one with us; ſo, by our receiving and applying Chriſt's broken body by faith, he is made one with us, and we one with him. As by eating bread, men live upon it, and get ſupport and ſtrength for working or journeying; ſo believers, by looking to, and truſting wholly in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and the merit of his blood, they feed and receive ſpiritual nouriſhment, and ſtrength for their work and warfare, and ſo make progreſs in their journey to Canaan.

O that I had a ſpiritual hunger and ſharp appetite for this bread of life, and were deſiring and longing for it, for the ſupport and nouriſhment of my ſoul, more than a hungry man doth for bread to his body. A hungry man, periſhing for want of bread, would prefer a piece of bread before many bags of gold, if both were ſet before him, and he allowed to make his choice; ſo the awakened ſoul, that ſees his need of Chriſt, prefers him to a whole world; give him never ſo much of the world's comforts, he is ſtill diſſatisfied without Chriſt, and ſays, What will all theſe things avail me, if my ſtarving ſoul periſh without Chriſt the bread of life?

I have many arguments to plead with God for this bread: Lord, do not thy free calls and promiſes bind thee to give it me? Thou haſt ſaid, "The needy ſhall not be forgotten." Is not Chriſt, the bread from heaven, the free gift of God to periſhing ſouls? And doſt not thou invite thoſe to come and eat of it, that have

have no money or price to give for it? Lord, thou hadſt compaſſion upon the bodies of men when they had no bread to eat, and didſt provide bread for five thouſand of them by a miracle; and haſt thou not as much compaſſion to ſtarving ſouls, that are more precious? Lord, thou giveſt natural affections to earthly parents, and makeſt them pitiful to their children, when they cry for bread, ſo that they cannot ſhut up their bowels againſt them when hungry, nor will they give them a ſtone inſtead of bread. And will my heavenly Father, who is infinitely more compaſſionate than the moſt tender parents, refuſe the bread of life to ſtarving ſouls who cry earneſtly for it? Lord, I truſt in thy mercy, and depend on thy promiſe, I believe thou wilt not let a poor hungry beggar ſtarve and fall down at thy door, when there is bread enough in thy houſe, and to ſpare. O cauſe me ſing with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xiii. 5. "But I have truſted in thy mercy, my heart ſhall rejoice in thy ſalvation."

SACRAMENTAL

SACRAMENTAL

ADVICES

FROM VARIOUS

SCRIPTURE-TEXTS.

ADVICE I.

From Gen. vii. 1. *Come thou and all thine houſe unto the Ark.*

AS God in his mercy called Noah to come into the ark prepared for him and his houſhold, to ſave him from drowning in the great deluge; ſo God by the goſpel calls you, O man, to come into the Ark, Chriſt crucified, which he hath provided for periſhing ſinners, to ſave them from the deluge of wrath that is coming. God hath long forewarned you of it; nay, the flood is beginning to riſe, it is time for thee to flee to this Ark; believe it, there is no other way for thy ſafety. The ark of thy prayers, or of thy tears, convictions, or reformations, will not ſave thee from it; nothing will do it but the Ark Chriſt.

As all who were out of Noah's ark periſhed in the flood; ſo will all periſh who are out of Chriſt. Thoſe of the old world, who only came near to the ark, or touched the outſide of it, they periſhed if they did not enter into it; ſo in like manner will thoſe periſh, who only come near Chriſt by an outward profeſſion, and are not found in him by a true faith.

As the ark gave a good account of all that entered into it, not one of them was loſt in the flood; ſo will Chriſt give a good account at the laſt day of all that fly to him by faith: None ſhall pluck them out of his hand, not one of them ſhall periſh in the deluge of wrath;

wrath; Chriſt will preſent them all ſafe to his Father, "Behold here am I, and the children thou haſt given me."

As Noah's ark was acceſſible, and had a door in it for people to enter; ſo in a crucified Jeſus there is a door of acceſs opened, even a *door of faith*, whereby poor ſinners of the Gentiles may have acceſs to Chriſt, and to God in him, Acts xiv. 17. As Paul and Barnabas rehearſed it as glad tidings to the church, that "God had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles;" ſo we Gentile ſinners ſhould gladly receive the news. Glory to God in the higheſt, for opening this door of faith, and keeping it ſtill open to periſhing ſinners.

Come, then, O Gentile ſinner, enter in by this door to the Ark, and lodge thy ſoul within it, that thou mayſt be ſafe from the flood of wrath that is coming upon the ungodly world. God forbid you be found hovering without the Ark, until the flood come and waſh you off from the very ſides of it. O how diſmal and cutting will the thought be to you through all eternity, that you was ſo near Chriſt, and within a ſtep of the Ark, and ſometimes touching it, and yet never entered it! How ſad will it be to periſh, like the thief upon the croſs, with a Saviour at your ſide! and to ſink into hell betwixt the arms of mercy ſtretched forth to ſave you! Now, poor ſoul, the Ark is near you, flee to it with ſpeed; behold, for your encouragement, there is a window opened in the ſide of the Ark, and mercy's hand is put forth to take in ſhelterleſs doves who come to it. Now is the time to beſtir yourſelf, to come into the Ark without delay, and ſo prevent your periſhing in the flood for ever.

Q. What ſhall I do to get into the Ark; to wit, a crucified Jeſus?

A. 1. Be like Noah's dove which he ſent forth, ſee that you find no reſt for the ſole of your foot any where elſe; turn your back upon all other arks of mens deviſing, they are all inſufficient to ſave you from the flood: Make not an ark of the abſolute mercy of God out of Chriſt, ſeeing he declares a crucified Jeſus to be

the only channel of his mercy. Make not an ark of church-privileges, as your good education, admiſſion to ſealing ordinances, &c. for the ark did not ſave Shiloh, nor the altar's horns ſave Joab, nor the temple ſave Jeruſalem. Make not an ark of your gifts, knowledge, prayers, duties, moral honeſty, or ſelf-righteouſneſs; for the flood, when it comes, will daſh all theſe in pieces. Suppoſe thoſe of the old world had built other ſhips as like the ark as poſſible, or had fled to high towers of their own contriving, the deluge would have deſtroyed them all; there was no ſafety for them but in Noah's ark alone. So whatever arks you deviſe to ſave you from wrath, if a crucified Chriſt, the Ark of God's building, be ſlighted, the flood will ſweep away all your own arks, as the *refuge of lies*, Iſa. xxviii. 17.

2. Labour to be thoroughly convinced of your miſery while out of the Ark; and, in a deep ſenſe of your neceſſity of getting into it, break preſently over all the bars and hinderances which the devil caſts in your way to ſtop your entry into the Ark; as unbelief, ſinful pleaſures, worldly cares, preſumptuous hopes, carnal company, diverſions, &c. break reſolutely thro' all theſe to the Ark, as David's three mighty men brake through the hoſt of the Philiſtines to the well of Bethlehem; ſurely your arguments for doing it are far ſtronger than theirs.

3. Approve heartily the whole contrivance of God's Ark in all its rooms and ſtories: Approve Chriſt crucified in his Perſon, nature, offices and relations; in his ſtates of humiliation and exaltation: Accept of him in them all, ſubſcribe to the whole new-covenant-ſcheme, as a device worthy of God, and of infinite wiſdom; conſent to the great end and deſign of it; namely, that *ſelf* be debaſed, and *free grace* eternally magnified.

4. Be frequently eſſaying faith's flight unto the Ark, and to the window in the ſide of it; make earneſt mints like Noah's reſtleſs dove, to get in; ſay oft like David, Pſal. lv. 6. "O that I had wings like a dove, for then I would fly away and be at reſt." I would haſten

haſten my eſcape from the flood, and lodge my ſoul this minute in one of the rooms of the Ark. Believing is a work you ſhould be often eſſaying, and though you cannot believe with ſaving faith, yet believe as you can, looking to God for more ſtrength. You cannot pray, praiſe, or ſanctify the ſabbath aright, yet you aim at theſe duties as you can; ſo, in like manner, make honeſt mints at believing and flying to Chriſt; and aim in his ſtrength, to apply his blood, every man to his own ſoul in particular, by an appropriating faith (correſponding to the free goſpel offer) and taking home the remedy as his own; depending ſtill upon the Spirit's grace, who will not fail thoſe who truſt in him, but aſſiſt them in making ſaving application.

5. Be willing to part with every thing that would compete with God's ark, however ſpecious or plauſible a ſhew it may have. Renounce the old covenant, and all lurking places about mount Sinai, for in none of theſe you can find ſafety. Abhor your own righteouſneſs for an Ark, whatever ſhape it appear in; and embrace him alone for it, who is "the Lord our righteouſneſs" His righteouſneſs only is ſpotleſs, perfect and law-biding.

6. Make a ſurrender of yourſelf, and all you have, to Jeſus Chriſt, to be diſpoſed of by him as he pleaſeth: Be willing to ſuffer the loſs of all things for him; yea, count all things loſs and dung, that you may win to the Ark, and be found therein when the flood cometh.

ADVICE

ADVICE II.

From Rev. iii. 20. *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock.*

LOST ſinner, I bring you good tidings; the eternal Son of God hath undertaken a long journey, and endured great ſufferings to purchaſe ſalvation for thee! A dear purchaſe it is, dear hath it coſt him to obtain it! and now he hath brought it the length of thy door, and there, O man, Chriſt is ſtanding, knocking, and ſaying, "This day ſalvation is come to this door," open and take it in. Now, can you refuſe, O ſinner, to take in Chriſt's purchaſed ſalvation, when Chriſt hath come with it to thy very door, even the door of thy heart. Behold he ſtands at it, and knocks for entrance! Open, open, &c.

The arguments for your opening are ſtrong and many:

1. Conſider at whoſe door Chriſt doth ſtand, even at the door of a creature infinitely below him. Oh! it is a beggar's door, that hath nothing to entertain Chriſt with when he enters! yet ſaith he, Open to me, and I will bring in proviſion with me, and make thee a rich feaſt. It is at the door of a poor Lazarus, that is all full of ulcers and ſores; yet, ſaith Chriſt, Open, and I will bring in the balm of Gilead, a plaiſter of my blood for healing all your ſores, and, for as coſtly as it is, it ſhall coſt you nothing. It is even at the door of an enemy, a mortal enemy, that Chriſt ſtands; you have ſpoke ill of him, thought ill of him, and done ill to him; you have affronted him, wounded him, and lodged his traitors and murderers; yet, ſaith Chriſt, Open, and hearken to the offers and terms of reconciliation which I have purchaſed for you with my blood; they are moſt ſurpriſing and ſafe, eaſy and honourable. —It is at the door of ſatan's ſlaves that Chriſt ſtands, thoſe who have been long drudging at his work and feeding

feeding upon his huſks; yet, ſaith Chriſt, open to me, and I will ſet you at liberty, and make you God's freemen and children. Why then will you not open and receive him joyfully? O ſinner, ſtand amazed at Chriſt's condeſcending goodneſs, in ſtanding at the door of ſuch a ſmoaky-cottage, ſo ill ſwept, and out of order! Good reaſon have you to cry out, "Lord, I am not worthy thou ſhouldſt come under my roof." But ſeeing thou humbleſt thyſelf to viſit the unworthy in ſuch a manner, come in, and but ſpeak the word, and the houſe ſhall be cleanſed, diſeaſes healed, grievances redreſſed, and the ſoul made happy. It is highly your intereſt then to open the door, and welcome in your Saviour, who ſtands and knocks for acceſs.

2. Again, conſider who it is that ſtands at your door: It is even the King of glory, a King of infinite power and majeſty! And will you not lift up the gates of your ſouls to this King? Were it but an earthly king that knocked at your door, you would ſoon open and receive him; yea, count it a great honour that you had ſuch a perſon in your houſe. But what are clay kings to the "King of glory? To the Prince of the kings of the earth? To our great Immanuel, the glorious Plant of renown, the Head of the elect world?" Who then would not caſt the gates wide open to ſuch a glorious King? Again, he is "the everlaſting Father," and the Father of all believers, that ſtands and knocks! A Father full of pity, that follows after his prodigal children, and invites them to return to him! And will not a child open the door to his father? Can you find in your heart to keep your compaſſionate Father ſtanding at your door? Nay, further, it is your Huſband that knocks, a loving Huſband, that hath ſuffered much for your cauſe: And will not an affectionate ſpouſe open and let in her huſband? Moreover, it is your Phyſician that knocks, who brings healing medicines for all your diſeaſes, by which he hath cured many thouſands before now! And will not a ſick and dying man let in ſuch a Phyſician? Open, O ſinner, why will you die?

III. Conſider

III. Conſider Chriſt's *patience* and long ſuffering at your door; he doth not knock and then go away as one indifferent whether you open or not; no, he knocks and ſtands ſtill; he ſtands and knocks again, and that after many repulſes! No beggar, wanting an alms, would ſtand ſo long at our doors, as Chriſt ſtands at a beggar's door, not ſeeking to take from him, but wanting to give unto him. O wonder at his goodneſs and long patience! Behold, he that hath a throne of glory to ſit on, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand to bow before him, is willing, O ſinner, to ſtand at thy door! Yes, he ſtands, whilſt thou doſt ly in the boſom of thy luſts. He ſtands without, whilſt his enemies are let in, and allowed to poſſeſs the beſt ſeats! He ſtands at the door while ſatan is let in, and gets the eaſy chair! O wonderful patience! that Chriſt, after ſo many affronts and repulſes, and after ſeeing enemies preferred before him, ſhould continue to ſtand at your door and knock! But, O ſinner, do not try his patience too much, nor provoke him too long; for, obſerve the text, he now ſtands, he is on his feet ready to go away; the knock will be given that will prove the laſt, and thou knoweſt not but the preſent knock may be it; do not the delay to open one moment longer.

IV. Conſider Chriſt's *earneſt deſire* to be let into your heart; he not only ſtands at the door, but he knocks; yea, knocks loud, and knocks often, to convince you of his earneſtneſs. Many a loud knock doth he give, by his calls and invitations in his word, "Come unto me, —open unto me,—look unto me." Many a knock gives he by his promiſes to you, "I will come in,—I will ſup with you,—I will eaſe you,—heal you,—enlighten you,—manifeſt myſelf to you," &c. Many a knock gives he by his threatenings of wrath and vengeance againſt thoſe who ſhut their doors againſt him. Many a knock gives he by your own conſcience, and by his own Spirit raiſing convictions, inclinations, deſires and purpoſes, within your heart to bring you to a Saviour. And many a rap and knock doth he give at your door on ſacramental occaſions. Then it is he knocks aloud with his nailed hands and pierced feet, and ſtands at your

your door with his wounds open, his blood ſtreaming, and his garments dyed with blood: and all this to ſhow his earneſtneſs to be let into your heart. Open then to Chriſt, O ſinner, while he is knocking, be aſſured he will not knock always, this may poſſibly be the laſt day of the Spirit's knocks and ſtrivings with thee; ſo that, if you refuſe to open at this preſent knock, God may ſtrike you dead and ſenſeleſs all your life, clap a ſeal on the door that it ſhall never open; you may hear miniſters knock after this, but never hear God's Spirit knock again; and "wo unto you if he depart from you." Remember, O man, for as many knocks God gives at your door, he keeps an exact account of them all, and will reckon them all up to you at the judgment-ſeat. And can you think he will open heaven to you then, who will not open your heart to him now! No, no; his ear will be as deaf to you hereafter, as yours is to him now. Read and believe that terrible word, Prov. i. 24. &c.

ADVICE III.

From Rev. iii. 20. *If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and ſup with him.*

GREAT and precious are the promiſes which Chriſt makes to them who hearken to his voice in the goſpel-offers, and open their hearts to receive him as offered to them in all his offices; I will come in, and bring all the benefits of my purchaſe with me, to entertain and feaſt that ſoul, even pardon, peace, light, life, grace and glory.

I. Obſerve the duty called for, is to hear Chriſt's voice and open the door to him; that is, to accept and embrace the free goſpel-offers, and heartily to acquieſce in the goſpel-method of a ſinner's reconciliation and ſanctification through the righteouſneſs of our glorious Immanuel, and willingly receive and ſubmit to him as our Prophet, Prieſt and King. What is the preaching of the goſpel, but Chriſt's charming voice calling loſt ſinners

ſinners home to himſelf? What is it, but Chriſt's following them with invitations and intreaties to come to him and live? This is Chriſt's voice which he would have ſinners to hear, come and live; though they generally refuſe to do it! O what condemned malefactor would refuſe to hear the voice of his ſovereign offering him his life, as condemned ſinners do? John v. 40. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Yet behold, after many refuſals, he follows his offers with arguments, ſtrong arguments to prevail with ſinners, and after the greateſt obſtinacy he is loth to break off his treaty with them, Hoſ. xi. 8. "How ſhall I give thee up, Ephraim?—Why will ye die?" What reaſon can you give "for refuſing life? or for chooſing death?"

II. Obſerve who it is that Chriſt calls to hear his voice, and open their doors to him: It is not this or that man only, or any particular ſort of men, it is any *man*, every man that ſits under the goſpel. "If any man will hear my voice and open the door, (ſaith Chriſt) I will come in." "If any man will open, (be he old man or young man) I will come in." If the greateſt ſinner, the moſt crimſon-coloured ſinner, will open, I will come in. "Any man," if the ſwearer will open, if the ſabbath-breaker, if the murderer, if the drunkard, if the unclean, if the thief, if the cheat, if the liar, if the mocker, if the prayerleſs man, if the man that hates God and godlineſs, will open to me, "I will come in and ſup with him." O what encouragement doth this word, "If any man," give to every ſinner to flee to Chriſt? If any man, whoever he be, whatever he hath done, if he will welcome me, receive me in the goſpel-offers, I will come in to him.

III. Obſerve, Chriſt requires ſinners to open the door that he may come in, to teach them; however unable they be, this is their duty; they muſt mint, and uſe all means to do it, and look up to him for ſtrength. He will have the ſinner's conſent, and the ſoul made willing to receive him. O then caſt open the door, open it wide, receive Chriſt wholly, receive him without reſerve, open before him the "the two-leaved gates," not the wicket, or one leaf only, but both leaves of the door. Let Chriſt have the full and free conſent of the

ſoul,

ſoul, an abundant entrance into it. There are ſome reſolving to open the door to Chriſt, others perhaps are beginning to open it: O let them not halt in doing it. With ſome the door is half open, and there they ſtop. They are almoſt, but not altogether Chriſtians. O almoſt Chriſtian, why do you halt? Why would you loſe all the pains you have been at? A little more would caſt the door wide open, and make you an altogether Chriſtian. Go then a little further, O ſinner, to ſave your ſoul. Open to Chriſt all the powers and faculties of your ſoul. Open to him fully here, as you would have him to open freely to you hereafter. Oh, what mean you to open to Chriſt by halves? Alas, the half open door will be ready to go to again, and if ſo, it may never open for the future. Let it be your concern then to go a little further than the almoſt Chriſtian, and reſt not in fair beginnings.

IV. Obſerve, how great the advantage is of opening the door to Chriſt: Why? I will come into the houſe, ſaith he, even the friend of ſinners, the King of glory will come in, the beſt gueſt that ever came into a poor man's houſe: How honourable, how profitable, how happy and bleſſed, muſt ſuch a viſit be! *Q.* For what end will Chriſt come in? *A.* He will come in to enlighten the houſe; for the ſoul is a dark dungeon while Chriſt is ſhut out: He will come in to adorn and enrich the ſoul with the ornaments and treaſures of his grace: He will come in to reign in the ſoul, and pull down the tyrant that hath long oppreſt you: As in the text, he will come in and ſup with you, and cauſe you to ſup with him: And, becauſe you have no fitting proviſion in the houſe, he will bring it with him. And O how rare are Chriſt's dainties, his hidden manna, the fruits of the tree of life, the grapes of Canaan, the bread that comes down from heaven! How excellent is the water of life! One drop of it would be an everlaſting ſpring in thy ſoul, that would keep thee from thirſting after the creature any more. What a rich feaſt are the graces of the Spirit quickened to a lively exerciſe! What a bleſt feaſt is pardon of ſin, peace with juſtice,

peace with the law, an intereſt in Chriſt's purchaſe, intimations of Chriſt's love, goſpel-promiſes applied, communion with God, views of eternal life, well grounded hopes of immortal glory! &c. O how precious and delicate are thoſe goſpel rarities which are ſet before you on the communion-table, and freely tendered to every one that opens the door to Chriſt! Who would not welcome ſuch a Gueſt that brings ſuch glorious proviſion with him? Had poor ſinners ſpiritual appetites ſharpened for Chriſt's feaſt, there would not be ſo many ſhut doors againſt him.

V. Obſerve, how ſolemnly Chriſt offers theſe goſpel-bleſſings to you, with a *behold I ſtand*, &c. Chriſt takes witneſſes upon it, witneſſes againſt the refuſers: Behold, ye angels, and witneſs for me how kind and bountiful my offers are to Adam's rebellious children! Behold ye miniſters, and witneſs againſt thoſe who ſhut me out! Behold, ye ſtones and timber of the houſe, ye elements and communion-tables, bear witneſs for me and againſt them! Behold, ye fellow communicants and hearers, bear witneſs one againſt another, that I knocked, I called, I knocked loud, I knocked long, but ye kept your doors bolted againſt me. It is a melancholly thought for thoſe who are miniſters to entertain, that they will one day be brought in as witneſſes againſt thoſe who ſhut out their Saviour; but when called, they muſt witneſs againſt ſuch, though never ſo dear to them now, that Chriſt called, but they refuſed; he made kind and large offers, but they regarded them not. O then let every ſoul ſet about ſweeping and waſhing all the rooms, and caſt open all the doors, as wide as they can, to the King of glory, and receive him with acclamation and praiſe. Take the crown off the head of ſelf, and put it on the head of Chriſt, aſcribing all the glory of your ſalvation to him, and nothing to free-will, or your own doings.

ADVICE

ADVICE IV.

From Prov. ix. 5. *Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine,* &c.

CHRIST is the "Wiſdom of God," who hath made rich proviſion for entertaining his people, and hath ſet it before them in the ordinance of the Lord's ſupper; even Chriſt crucified, with all the fruits of his purchaſe. "His fleſh is meat, indeed, and his blood is drink, indeed." The fruits we feaſt upon are, "pardon and peace, righteouſneſs and grace, the aſſurance of God's love, the conſolations of his Spirit, the promiſes of the goſpel," and all the earneſts and pledges of eternal life. To this feaſt ſtarving ſouls are invited, to feed by faith upon thoſe promiſes Chriſt hath prepared for them, applying them to themſelves, and taking the comfort of them.

Bread and wine are choſen as fit reſemblances of his ſpiritual feaſt. As bread and wine ſerve to preſerve our natural life, and to ſtrengthen and chear us, when weak or fainting; ſo Chriſt crucified, apprehended by faith, preſerves our ſpiritual life, and procures eternal life, ſtrengthens weak believers, and chears drooping ſouls. As bread and wine incorporate with our bodies; ſo Chriſt by his Spirit dwells in us, and we by faith and love dwell in him. As bread and wine ſatisfy our hunger and thirſt; ſo thoſe, who by faith lay hold and partake of Chriſt's fleſh and blood, ſhall no more hunger or thirſt after earthly things. Bread is the moſt neceſſary thing in the world, hence called the *ſtaff of bread*, it upholds our lives; ſo Chriſt is the mercy of mercies, the moſt uſeful and neceſſary bleſſing to preſerve our ſtarving ſouls. Chriſt is the *Staff of bread*, indeed, to believing communicants, a Staff that ſupports you, a Staff that defends you, a Staff that will beat off all your enemies: If you take hold of this Staff by faith, it will rout and put all your foes to flight.

There is no bread like this! "I am the Bread of life," ſaith Chriſt.

We read, Judges viii. 13. of a dream of one of the Midianitiſh hoſt; he dreamed when Gideon was coming upon them, that a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the hoſt of Midian, and ſmote a tent that it fell to the ground. Strange! A piece of bread overturn a tent! Behold the interpretation of that dream, in the holy ſacrament! Here a piece of bread, if eaten by faith, that will invade the Midianitiſh hoſt of the devil, and the luſts of the fleſh, ſtrike down all their tents, and put them to flight. Come then, eat of this bread believingly, and take faith's view of Chriſt's body repreſented by it, as bruiſed and broken by your ſins; this will weaken their power, and turn your heart againſt them, and make you reſolve that thoſe enemies of Chriſt ſhall not live in your ſoul. If the ſight of Cæſar's bloody robe incenſed the Romans againſt the murderers who ſlew him; much more a ſight of Chriſt's wounds and bruiſes in the ſacrament, ſhould excite you to hate and kill ſin, and revenge Chriſt's death upon this cruel murderer.

Again, would you have ſtrength for your wilderneſs journey, and for the temptations and trials you meet with, before you have occaſion of another ſacrament? Come eat of this bread that ſtrengtheneth the hearts of men. Here is food more ſubſtantial, durable and nouriſhing, than Elijah's cake baken on the coals, and the cruiſe of water provided for him by the angel; and yet it is ſaid, he "went in the ſtrength of that meat forty days and forty nights, until he came to Horeb the mount of God," 1 Kings xix. 7. 8. There we find Elijah twice wakened by the angel, that he might take a double meal, "Ariſe and eat, for thy journey is long:" So God may be ſaying to thee, O Chriſtian-traveller, Ariſe and eat, awake, O faith, awake, O ſpiritual appetite, thy journey may be long; take a good meal, you know not what hills you have to climb, what winds and ſtorms may blow in thy face, before another occaſion of this ſort: Satan's ſtorm may blow, and death's ſtorms may blow, ſo that you may not ſee another table like this

this till you come to the mount of God above. This is the ſame bread the glorified ſaints do feed on in heaven. Chriſt is the Manna that came down from heaven to feed periſhing ſouls. The Iſraelites manna was a type of Chriſt, and hence called *ſpiritual bread*, 1 Cor. x. 4.

The manna was freely given to them, and fell every morning round their tents, and all of them were at freedom to gather it, and there was enough for the whole camp; ſo Chriſt is God's free gift, and in him is a fulneſs of grace for the whole believing world, and every goſpel-hearer is free to gather it, though indeed the morning of our lives is the moſt proper gathering time. There was a memorial of this manna preſerved in the ark; ſo is there of Chriſt in the Lord's ſupper, as the food of our ſouls. Manna was ground in a mill, or beaten in a mortar, and baken in an oven, before it was fit for food; ſo Chriſt was bruiſed and ground by his ſufferings, and ſcorched in the fiery oven of his Father's wrath, that he might become a fit Saviour, and fit food for our ſouls.

But Chriſt crucified infinitely excels the Iſraelites manna: Theirs was peculiar to themſelves; but Chriſt is free to both Jews and Gentiles: Theirs ceaſed when they came to Canaan; but ours continues for ever, and is enjoyed moſt fully in the Canaan above: Theirs only preſerved a natural life; but ours gives a ſpiritual and eternal life. O come, then, eat of this heavenly Bread, when ſet before you in plenty, with hunger and deſire, bleſſing God for it, ſaying, "Lord, evermore give us this Bread:" Come with ſpiritual appetites and purified hearts. The Iſraelites manna was laid up in the ark, and kept in a pure golden pot, to teach you to cleanſe your hearts from ſin and corruption, that they may be fit to lodge Jeſus Chriſt our heavenly Manna. If the veſſels which contain the ſacramental bread were foul or polluted, you would cenſure it as moſt indecent; but much more unbecoming is it, to receive Chriſt into a foul heart.

Come to this table with humility, and a deep ſenſe of your ill-deſervings, acknowledging, that the leaſt crumb of this Bread will be a great mercy to ſuch an unworthy creature!

creature! "Truth, Lord, I am a dog," vile and polluted, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the childrens table! May I plead for a crumb for thy free mercies ſake. Oh, I am unworthy of the common bread that is ſet upon my own table, much more of the heavenly Bread that is ſet upon thine! Inſtead of bread thou mayſt give me a ſtone; inſtead of a ſmile, a frown; inſtead of the cup of the New Teſtament, thou mayſt put a cup of wrath and trembling in my hand: But thy free grace and large offers, encourage me to wait and hope, that "the needy ſhall not be forgotten, and the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh."

Come with a lively faith to receive and eat, not only of the bread of life, but alſo to receive the Bread, the Lord, your Immanuel, in perſon, and make uſe of him in all his offices. Come, eat with love and thankfulneſs, to him that was willing to be beaten, bruiſed, ground, and ſcorched, that he might be Bread for nouriſhing or ſtarving ſouls. Receive this Bread of heaven thankfully as a diſtinguiſhing bleſſing, which is not granted to all indifferently; for as God rained down manna from heaven upon the Iſraelites; ſo he rained down fire and brimſtone upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

ADVICE V.

From Gen. xlv. 4. *Come near to me, I am Joſeph your brother, whom you ſold.*

JOSEPH was an eminent type of Chriſt: though he was hated, ſold, and cruelly uſed by his brethren; yet he ſtill loved them, forgave them, and laid out himſelf for their preſervation and happineſs. Though Chriſt be Lord of heaven and earth; yet, O believing communicants, he owns himſelf as your brother, "bone of your bone, and fleſh of your fleſh;" nay, he is not aſhamed to call you brethren, "Go tell my brethren," ſaid he to Mary, Mat. xxviii. 10. Though you be mean and

and low, and Chriſt highly raiſed, yet his exaltation doth not cauſe him forget his poor friends below; he ſtill owns them as his brethren. He is indeed the elder Brother, and Heir of all things; yet he is pleaſed to adopt his younger brethren into his right, and make them joint heirs with him of the inheritance above. As Joſeph was moſt condeſcending to his poor brethren, though he was lord over all the land; ſo is Chriſt. As they did not know Joſeph, until he told them, "I am Joſeph your brother;" ſo neither do we know Chriſt, until he diſcover himſelf to us. As Joſeph ſeemed to deal roughly with his brethren at firſt, to make them remember the injuries they did him; yet in the mean time he loved them, gave them food, and afterwards ſpoke kindly to them. So Chriſt at firſt takes ways to humble his people, and make them ſenſible of their ſin; yet, at the ſame time, he ſecretly ſupports them, and at length brings in conſolation to them, ſaying, "I am Jeſus your brother, it is I, be not afraid." "Come near to me," ſaid Joſeph, in a kind and familiar way to his brethren; ſo Chriſt ſaith to you, draw near to me with a ſincere heart, and I will manifeſt myſelf unto you as a loving Brother.

But if you would have the gracious intimations of his favour, you muſt firſt be humbled for the wrongs you have done him. You have dealt treacherouſly and inhumanely with Chriſt, as Jacob's ſons did with their brother Joſeph. Theſe ſold their brother for twenty pieces of ſilver; but, ah! have not ſome of you ſold Jeſus, your brother, for leſs, even for ſome vile luſt or filthy pleaſure? Nay, have you not murdered him by your ſins? As Cain ſlew his innocent brother openly in the field; ſo your ſins have openly nailed Jeſus to the croſs, in the fields without Jeruſalem, and ſhed his blood like water on the ground. O how can you anſwer for ſuch horrid cruelty to your innocent Brother? How can you look him in the face, after all you have done againſt him? What feeling have you of the injuries you have done him? Are you deeply humbled, and heartily grieved for them? Then I have good news to tell you, you have to do with a moſt loving and

and forgiving Brother; though you have betrayed him, ſold him, wounded him, murdered him; yet he is willing to forget and forgive all to the humble penitent: "Come near to me, (ſaith he) I am Joſeph your brother;"—ſtand not at a diſtance, but come near me by faith and prayer, embrace me in the ſacrament, and I will give you a ſealed pardon of all your crimes; I will give you all the good things of the land, far excelling the richeſt fruits of Egypt, even my own body and blood, with all the ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings purchaſed thereby.

Object. But, alas! I have dealt ſo baſely and treacherouſly with my Brother Joſeph, I have no confidence to go and meet him, I am afraid he frown on me. *Anſ.* He has indeed good ground to do it, but he is full of bowels, tenderneſs and pity to penitents, and moſt ready to forgive. Let me adviſe you to imitate Jacob when going to meet his bother Eſau, whoſe wrath he very much dreaded. He carried preſents alongſt with him to his brother. In like manner, do you take preſents with you; ſuch as, 1. A broken, contrite and humbled heart, "a broken heart he will not deſpiſe." 2. Take faith with you, and the ſtronger it is it will be the more agreeable preſent to Chriſt; put a firm truſt and confidence in his blood and bowels, bode and threap kindneſs on him, like the woman of Canaan, "Truth, Lord, I am a dog," but dog as I am, I may plead for a crumb, ſeeing thy faithful word warrants me to do it. This preſent from that poor creature was ſo acceptable to Chriſt, that he immediately anſwered, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt, Mat. xv. 28. 3. Take with you a firm purpoſe and reſolution, in the ſtrength of your Brother, not to betray or wound him any more, and ſeal a covenant with him upon theſe terms. 4. Take with you a ſincere heart and purpoſe of imitating your Brother, and ſtudying conformity to him. "Learn of me, (ſaith he) for I am meek and lowly in heart." Theſe preſents would be moſt acceptable to your grieved and offended Brother. But ſeeing you have nothing of your own, cry, Lord, give them firſt to me, and I'll offer them unto thee.

What

What condeſcenſion is this, that Chriſt, the King of kings, ſhould ſay to all believers, Ye are my brethren and ſiſters! Who would not deſire to ſtand in this honourable relation to an earthly king, and far more to the King of glory! Would we have him then for our Brother to own us, ſuccour and ſympathize with us in all our troubles; let us forthwith embrace and cloſe with him by faith, as he is tendered to us in the rich, large and free offers of the goſpel, and then the relation is preſently made up. O how inviting and alluring is that word, I am Jeſus your Brother! It ſhould conquer the moſt ſtubborn will, and make every unbelieving heart to receive him like Thomas, and ſay, "My Lord, and my God."

Let every believer in diſtreſs come like the bee, and ſuck honey from this Flower, I am Jeſus your Brother, "Be not afraid, it is I." Do not miſtake me for an enemy in any of my dealings with you. It is I your Brother that means you no harm. It is I that loves you, and laid down my life for you. It is I who by my blood purchaſed ſanctified afflictions to you, to work for your good. It is I that doth all things well, and have infinite wiſdom and love to order and direct every diſpenſation for your intereſt and benefit. It was I that ſwate blood for you in the garden, was ſpit on and buffeted in the high-prieſt's hall, and nailed for you to the croſs, and all to purchaſe eternal happineſs and glory for my afflicted brethren. I am Jeſus your Brother, "behold my hands and my feet." It is I that died and roſe again for you, and have aſcended to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God; and have gone up to prepare a place for you. It is I that ſit at the helm, and all power given to me. It is I that am faithful and true, and I have the ſame tender heart and yearning bowels for you I had on earth. It is I that never failed any that truſted in me. It is Jeſus your Brother, who am ſtill the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever. Be not afraid in trouble, it is I your dear Friend and Brother; come near to me in the daily exerciſe of faith. Come near and cloſe to me at my table, and take a narrow look to my five big wounds, and draw conſo-

lation from them. Behold the two wounds in my hands, and the two wounds in my feet, which were made to bring you back from hell to heaven. Behold a fifth wound in my ſide, and look into my heart, and ſee it panting with love, and do not queſtion your Brother's love to you any more.

ADVICE VI.

From Matth. xxii. 2. *A certain king made a marriage for his ſon.*

THE goſpel-covenant, or covenant of grace, is a marriage-covenant betwixt Chriſt and believers; a ſurpriſing marriage this is, and yet a marriage of God's making. Wonderful! The great God is content to give his dear Son in marriage to fallen Adam's daughter, that was become a ſlave to the devil! Yea, he hath drawn up the contract, and all the articles of it. Chriſt the Bridegroom hath cheerfully ſubſcribed the contract, he dipt the pen in his own blood on the croſs, and put his hand to it in the view of God, angels, men, and all the world. Now the Bridegroom wants your conſent to the marriage-contract, and he hath long been courting you to ſubſcribe it. Some of you have often been purpoſed to do it, yea, taken the pen in your hand, but, upon ſome ſmall temptation, have ſtopt and thrown by the pen. This day Chriſt hath ſet a tryſt with you to conclude the bargain, and his ambaſſadors are come, in his name, to ſpread the contract before you with all its articles. Well, then, "Will you go with this man?" Will you put your hand to the contract?

O ſinners, you have no reaſon to be ſhy in this matter, you have nothing to be vain of, you are mean born, of low extract; you are loathſome lepers, you are deformed, black, and have no beauty; you are cripples, cannot walk, unleſs Chriſt lift you; you are drowned in debt, many old ſcores hath Chriſt to clear for you, if he match with you. O who would make love to ſuch a wretched creature! Yet, behold, here is one that is fairer than the ſons of men, of the blood-royal of heaven,

ven, the Heir of all things, courting you! Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this match! One infinitely rich with a beggar, the Heir of heaven with the heir of hell, the Beauty of heaven and earth with a deformed negro! But if the Bridegroom be content, why ſhould you ſtick? Can you give any reaſon for your refuſal or delay? Now the God of heaven is ſetting tryſt with you to conclude this bleſſed bargain with you at his table, and calling you there to ſign and ſeal a marriage-contract with his Son, and that before all the Perſons of the glorious Trinity, before the elect angels, before Chriſt's ambaſſadors, and before all the congregation, witneſſes thereto. There have been many meetings heretofore, about this grand affair, to no effect; The world, ſatan, and the fleſh, have formerly broke off the treaty; forbid it, Lord, that they do it this day. O that the long ſpoke of match betwixt a crucified Jeſus and loſt ſouls may hold at laſt. This may be the laſt tryſt, the laſt offer Chriſt will make; it may be now or never with you. Lay your hand to your heart then, and conſider well before you refuſe.

Come, take another view of this beautiful Bridegroom that is in your offer. Behold how delicate his complexion is, "He is white and ruddy;" *white* in regard of his innocence, and *ruddy* in his bloody paſſion. O how peerleſs is his Perſon! How raviſhing his beauty! How charming his voice! How ſtately his goings! How fragrant are his garments! They ſmell of aloes, myrrh and caſſia! Search all the world, you cannot find his equal. One glimpſe of him is enough to raviſh men and angels; "His locks are black and buſhy as the raven, his lips are like lillies dropping ſweet ſmelling myrrh, his legs as pillars of marble ſet upon ſockets of fine gold; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; yea, he is altogether lovely!" Now, can you refuſe ſuch a lovely Perſon, eſpecially when you think how he loved you, ſo as to ſuffer a cruel and bloody death for you, and to ſend his portraiture with the marks of his wounds, to be put in your hands at his holy table, and all to win your heart? Come, view and remember the many wounds he received for you, by the thorns which pierced his head, by the pincers that

plucked his hair, by the ſcourges that tore his back, by the nails that pierced his hands and feet, and by the ſpear that opened his ſide! Surely thoſe wounds do not mar his beauty to the eye of faith; nay, though he be all over wounded, mangled and bleeding, yet to a believer he is ſtill "white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſands, fairer than all the ſons of men," nay, and all the ſons of God too

Certainly the Bridegroom muſt be in earneſt, when he comes in his marriage-robes to win backward hearts, when he puts on his dyed garments, and is red in his apparel: when he diſplays his glory, brings the marriage-contract in his hand, ſpreads it on the communion-table, and calls all who love him to ſign it. O that many were made willing, in a day of his power, to go in to all the articles of this marriage covenant, ſaying, My heart is now content to go with the man Chriſt, that wonderful man; I conſent to all his terms, he is "My Lord, and my God," my glorious Immanuel; "My Beloved is mine, and I am his." *Queſt.* I would know particularly what he requires on my part of the contract, that I may diſtinctly cloſe with him? *Anſ.* He would have you, 1. Convinced of your ſinking and periſhing ſtate, while you ſtand upon the old bottom of the covenant of works; and willing to leave it, and leap from it, and cleave to a covenant of grace, and a borrowed righteouſneſs, for all the ground of your hope. 2. He would have you humbled and grieved for your long ſlighting his kind offers by your unbelief, and for your preferring ſatan's drudgery to his ſervice. 3. Give up will all other lovers, and thoſe that would rival it with Chriſt, ſuch as ſin, the world, and the law; ſelf-righteouſneſs muſt be renounced and parted with; you muſt break league with all Chriſt's enemies. 4. Accept of Jeſus Chriſt as your Huſband, receive him in all his offices, reſt and depend on him alone for righteouſneſs, ſtrength, and ſalvation. 5. Give away yourſelves, ſoul and body to Chriſt; reſign your will to his will, and ſurrender all you have to his diſpoſal. 6. Reſolve and vow, in Chriſt's ſtrength, to crucify ſin, and walk with him in all the ways of new obedience. 7. Engage to be true

true and faithful to your Husband, and never to retract. 8. Keep up the remembrance of your Husband's coming at the last day to solemnize the marriage, and take you home to himself, and be always in readiness to go forth to meet him. The Bridegroom is ready long since, and will soon rend these clouds to meet you in the air, and send his angels to bring you to him: "Therefore be ye also ready."

O why doth he delay his coming? What stops the wheels of his chariot? Surely it is not because he is unready, but because you are not ready. All the elect are not yet brought in to him, and he is determined not to want one of them. O then, be providing for the marriage day all proper furniture, robes, jewels, rings and ornaments, against the time that Christ and you take up house together in heaven. Be sure to go to Christ for every bit of your plenishing, for righteousness, and for all the graces of the Spirit. In the mean time, take home with you the marriage-contract, the precious promises which Christ hath subscribed with his blood. Be often looking into it, and viewing your Bridegroom's hand-writ and engagement. His writing is fair and beautiful; let not satan or unbelief cast blots on it to deface it; keep it fair and legible, and draw all your comforts from it; your Husband is faithful, and will keep his word.

ADVICE VII.

From Lam. i. 22. *Behold and see, the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.*

WITH far better ground may Christ make use of these words of his church, and call us to behold his sufferings for us under the fierce anger of God, in the day when "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief in our stead," Isa. liii. 10. Many things did he suffer from men and devils; but his afflictions and bruises from the immediate hand of God taking vengeance

vengeance for the elects ſins, were far more heavy. His ſoul-ſufferings were the moſt afflicting of all others. Let every communicant behold, ſee, and conſider theſe with ſuitable affections.

Behold not only the buffetings, ſcourgings, woundings, and cruel mockings your lovely Jeſus endured from men, the inſtruments of God's juſtice; but eſpecially what he ſuffered in his ſoul by the deſertion or dereliction of God the Father, whereby the gracious influences and comforts from the divine to the human nature of Chriſt were ſuſpended for a time, and a black cloud of wrath overwhelmed him; ſo that no light appeared to him; which made him cry out, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" Nay, at this time he had a torrent of wrath flowing in upon his ſoul, and the moſt dreadful impreſſions of his Father's anger, and the law's curſe, which fell upon him for man's ſin, when he was made a curſe for us, that it caſt him into a fit of ſore amazement, conſternation and terrible agony, and into a ſweat of blood. The fire of wrath raging in his ſoul affected his body ſo, that it dried up his ſtrength and moiſture as a potſherd, and made his tongue cleave to his jaws. He held his peace under all his ſufferings from men, and opened not his mouth; but when God's immediate wrath fell heavily on him, then he cried out: It is ſaid, "He put up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong crying and tears," Heb. v. 7. Yet God would not ſpare him, nor abate him one ſtripe or farthing of the debt; let him cry never ſo loud, juſtice was inexorable; he muſt ſatisfy to the full.

O can you ſee the great Immanuel ſubſtituted in your room and ſtead;—God acting againſt him as an inexorable Judge; Jehovah running upon him as a giant, not only withdrawing his countenance, and all feeling of his loving kindneſs from him, but making him the butt of his envenomed arrows;—and not be filled with admiration at Chriſt's love, and ſorrow for your ſins, which brought ſuch a ſtorm of wrath upon him! O how ſad were the bruiſes! how deep were the wounds! how wide the gaſhes! and how heavy the blows he got from

from the ſword of juſtice for our ſins! The ſword was not dull nor ſleepy, but furbiſhed and awakened by juſtice to the execution. O how heavy were the blows our Surety got from this awakened ſword in the garden of Gethſemane, which made his "ſoul exceeding ſorrowful," and put him in a dreadful agony and bloody ſweat! Behold and ſee how patiently he drank the bitter cup of God's wrath for you, "the poiſon whereof drank up his ſpirits," and made his blood to boil in his veins, and burſt through his body, clothes and all! He ſwate without any outward fire or heat, and bled without any external wound. Behold his garments dyed red, and the ground and graſs where he lay all bedewed with his precious blood! Behold him broken with breach upon breach, till all the ſea-billows of divine vengeance went over him; ſo that he fell to the ground, was covered with blood, and overwhelmed with wrath! Behold and ſee, if there be any ſorrow like his ſorrows!

It is ſaid, Mark xiv. 33. "He began to be ſore amazed and very heavy!" which ſhews what a load and preſſure of wrath his ſoul lay under, that put him in an agony that ſtill increaſed more and more, like the waters in Ezekiel's viſion, ſtill deeper and deeper, from the ankles to the knees, till they became waters to ſwim in, yea, ſwelled into an ocean that would have overwhelmed the whole elect world. Into this ocean our bleſſed Jonah was willing to be thrown for our ſake, and in it he continued to ſwim, until he brought every elect ſoul ſafe aſhore. It is recorded of Abraham, when offering his ſacrifice, Gen. xv 12. "That in the evening lo an horror of great darkneſs fell upon him." This was verified much more of Chriſt in the evening before his paſſion, in the garden. There, a terrible horror of great darkneſs fell upon Chriſt's ſoul, which made him exceeding heavy, and ſore amazed, at the proſpect of the ſea of wrath that was coming rolling upon him; while the Father was hiding his face from him. O how great was the anguiſh of Chriſt's mind at this time, when he found himſelf preſſed and bruiſed betwixt the millſtone of God's juſtice and our ſins! which preſſure

preſſure made him ſweat without heat, and bleed without wound! Ah! the fire, the heat, the wounds, were inward, even in his ſoul! O communicants, behold and ſee Chriſt's ſorrows for you; nothing can be more acceptable to Chriſt than often to meditate thereon with admiration and love. If any of you had loſt a hand, or even a finger, in defending or reſcuing your friend from an enemy, you would expect he would be ever mindful of the favour, and never forget you. But O what is that to the ſufferings of the Son of God for you! He hath loſt not a hand but his heart-blood, yea, the favour and countenance of God for you for a time. He left his glorious throne in heaven, and ſtooped to become a man, a poor man, a man of ſorrows, a deſerted man, and a dead man for you. Nay, he was willing to be made a curſe for you, and to take on a dreadful load of wrath upon his innocent ſoul, yea infinitely more than any damned ſoul in hell can bear; and to ſwim long in a ſea of wrath to ſave you from periſhing in it. Let the ſurprizing love of Chriſt fill your ſoul with wonder, and kindle a flame of love in your ſoul to him.

Again, medite on Chriſt's ſorrows with deep ſorrow for ſin, the cauſe thereof: believe that amazing word, Iſa. liii. 6. "He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities." Let the ſound of it never go out of your ears; ſay, Oh! my ſins were the thorns which pierced his head, the nails which pierced his hands, and the ſpear that pierced his ſide. My curſed ſins put the Lord of life to a cruel death, they wounded him more than all his other enemies. When my dear Lord was in the garden, no Judas, no Pilate, no Jew, nor Gentile was there, to cauſe his amazing horror of ſoul, and his fearful ſweat of blood; but, Oh, my unbelief, my pride, my carnality, my hypocriſy and other ſins, were there, and with their weight preſſed him to the ground, and brought that agony and ſweat upon him. Oh, that my head were waters, that I might weep a flood of tears for my ſins!

Laſtly, Abhor ſin as the greateſt evil, and never have ſlight thoughts of it any more; can you behold your agonizing

agonizing Saviour under a burden of wrath, and hear him complaining of the burning heat and thirſt which the fire of juſtice created within him! Can you ſee the great drops of blood ſtanding above his garments! Can you hear his cries and roarings under the bruiſes and anguiſh of his ſoul, and not be convinced of the evil and demerit of ſin! Can that ſit light upon your ſoul which ſat ſo heavy upon Chriſt's ſoul! O what deſperate malignity muſt there be in that, which could not be expiated without ſuch a coſtly ſacrifice! Look on them as fools who make a ſport of ſin, which coſt the Son of God ſo much ſoul-travail and inward horror: Never yield any more to the temptations of ſin, which coſt ſo dear before it could be forgiven.

ADVICE VIII.

From Matth. xxvi. 22. *They were exceedingly ſorrowful, and began every one to ſay, Lord, is it I?*

IT was a commendable exerciſe of Chriſt's diſciples, before partaking of the holy ſupper, to be ſearching themſelves, and looking inward with a holy ſuſpicion upon their own hearts, eſpecially when Chriſt had told them that there was a traitor among them, and at the ſame time looking up to him that is omniſcient to aſſiſt them in the ſearch, ſaying, Lord, is it I? Am I the traitor? Will I betray my dear Lord and Saviour? Ah! every one of us have within us traiterous hearts to Jeſus Chriſt, and have reaſon to ſuſpect ourſelves as they did, and acknowledge we have many enemies of Chriſt, lodged in our boſoms, ſuch as "unbelief, hypocriſy, pride, malice, envy, ambition, worldlineſs, atheiſm, wanderings from God, backwardneſs to duty," &c. by which we have betrayed Jeſus Chriſt. And as the diſciples, when ſearching themſelves, "were exceeding ſorrowful;" ſo ought we before we partake: And good reaſon have we for it, when we reflect upon our former guilt and treacherous dealing with God, and when we conſider the preſent deceitfulneſs and deſperate wickedneſs

of our hearts, and that they are as ready to betray Chriſt as ever; yea, that there is hypocriſy and treachery in our hearts againſt Chriſt, which we have not yet diſcovered. Upon all which accounts, we have ground with the diſciples to be "exceeding ſorrowful."

Now is the time, O communicants, to ſearch and examine yourſelves, and to be exceeding ſorrowful for the many traiterous wounds you have given Chriſt, by breaking both tables of the law, and every command thereof; by ſinning againſt light and conſcience, againſt mercies and judgments, warnings and reproofs, confeſſions and prayers. By unthankfulneſs for redeeming love, neglecting goſpel-offers, not loving and reſting upon a crucified Jeſus, not accounting all things loſs and dung for him; not delighting in attending his ordinances, and in remembering his love in the holy ſupper. O how treacherous have your hearts been to Chriſt! How blood-thirſty have your ſins been againſt him, in preſſing him down in the garden, in nailing him to the curſed tree! How are you able to look to Gethſemane or Golgotha, with unconcerned hearts or dry eyes! Were not your ſins the principal actors in that horrid tragedy? Theſe, to be ſure, were the traitors, which, by the hands of Judas, delivered up Jeſus to be crucified: What were Pilate, the Jews, or Romans, but the executioners of your ſins? Who put the ſword in juſtice' hands? Who raiſed the tempeſt of wrath againſt your Surety? Oh! it was your ſins. Blame none ſo much as them; they were the Judas that betrayed him, the Herod that mocked him, the Pilate that condemned him, and the ſoldier that pierced him; will you not then be "exceeding ſorrowful" for your traiterous hearts and bloody ſins? Could they ever have been guilty of a more horrid crime than murdering the Lord of glory! O ſhall the rocks about Jeruſalem rend aſunder, the earth tremble and ſhake, the ſun vail its face, and the whole heavens put on a mourning habit, when Chriſt ſuffered for your ſins? And ſhall you, the criminals, who deſerved all this puniſhment, ſtand unaffected? O what ſtupid hearts muſt you have, if they do not mourn for your ſins which brought on ſuch agonies upon

upon the Son of God, before they could be expiated? Had you, in your paſſion, given a deadly wound to any poor innocent man, your hearts would have bled for it all your days; and will not your hearts much more relent for ſlaughtering the innocent Lamb of God! One that never wronged you, but was always interpoſing for you, and doing you good!

Remember what David ſaid to the Lord, when he ſaw the people deſtroyed for his ſin, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. "Lo I have ſinned, and done wickedly; but as for theſe ſheep, what have they done?" In like manner ſay you, Lord, I have ſinned, I have done wickedly; but as for this ſpotleſs Lamb, what hath he done? I have "eaten the ſour grapes," but his "teeth were ſet on edge." O when will your hearts melt, and your eyes weep, if not now? Never was there ſuch a moving ſight ſet before your eyes, as the Lord of glory pierced and ſlain by your ſins. Now it is that "deep calleth unto deep," deep ſufferings in Chriſt for deep ſorrow in thee.

O ſaith one, I deſire to be grieved for my hypocriſy and treacherous dealing with Chriſt, and for ſin that crucified him, but how ſhall I know if my ſorrow be of the right ſort? *Anſ.* Examine it by ſuch marks as theſe, 1. Godly-ſorrow is accompanied with ſome view of the mercy of God in Chriſt, which ſupports the ſoul, and keeps it from deſpair. Judas' ſorrow, however deep it was, wanted this neceſſary ingredient. 2. If true, it will be univerſal, both for your own ſins, and the ſins of others; for the ſins of the place where you live, and for thoſe of the whole land. 3. If it be right ſorrow, it will bring you to conſider the aggravation and heinous circumſtances of your ſins, as being againſt light, againſt love, and againſt ſolemn engagements and profeſſions of friendſhip; ſo as to mourn and cry, How traiterous hath my heart been to ſo kind a Maſter? 4. It will produce theſe ſeven happy effects mentioned, 2 Cor. vii. 11. There it is ſaid, Godly ſorrow for ſins works, 1. *Careſulneſs*; that is, a care to recover peace with God for what is paſt, and to pleaſe God for the time to come, by amending what is amiſs, and avoiding all temptations and occaſions that lead to ſin. 2. *Clearing of your-*

ſelves, by mourning over the ſins of other men, diſſenting from them, and ſhewing your deteſtation of them. 3. *Indignation* againſt ſin, as the abominable thing which God hates. The heart of a true penitent riſes, ſwells, and boils, againſt ſin. Then it is you are angry and ſin not, when you are angry at ſin, and at yourſelves for ſin. 4. *Fear*; the true penitent fears to offend God as he hath done, and that he may not do it, he nouriſheth a holy fear and awful impreſſion of the holineſs of God; and alſo a fear of holy *jealouſy* and *watchfulneſs* over himſelf, leſt ſin ſurprize him at any time. 5. *Vehement deſire*; to wit, after reconciliation with God through Chriſt, and after reformation of every thing amiſs, and to be entirely rid of all ſin. 6. *Godly ſorrow* produceth *zeal*, which is an affection or grace compounded of love and anger, to wit, love to God and duty, and anger againſt ſin and every thing oppoſite to God. 7. *Revenge*; by ſeeking the utter extirpation of ſin, by faſting, mortifying the fleſh, and denying yourſelves in ſome things lawful for a time. A good way to execute this revenge againſt ſin, is for penitents to take frequent views of the deep and bloody wounds which ſin hath given to your dear Redeemer. It is written of the emperor Julius Cæſar, that after he was murdered in the ſenate, they brought forth his robe all beſmeared with his blood to the market-place, and expoſed it to open view, in order to awaken his friends to take revenge on his enemies. This is ſurely one deſign of the holy ſacrament, to waken your zeal againſt ſin which murdered the Lord of glory. *Laſtly, godly ſorrow* for ſin, will drive you to Chriſt for help againſt ſin; it will make you flee to Chriſt for deliverance from an ill heart, as well as from the wrath that ſin deſerveth; hence the apoſtle cried, "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!" Rom. vii. 24.

ADVICE

ADVICE IX.

From Heb. vi. 18. *Who have fled for reguge, to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us.*

WE have here a two-fold deſcription of true believers, which come to one: 1. They are ſuch as have fled to Chriſt as the true city of refuge, to ſhelter them from avenging juſtice. 2. They are ſuch as have by faith laid hold on Chriſt ſet before them in the goſpel-promiſe, as their only hope of ſalvation.

Chriſt is our refuge-city from the curſes of the law which hang over us, from the avenger of blood, divine juſtice that purſues us, and from the devils which ly in wait for us. The cities of refuge under the law were ſix, but under the goſpel we have one better than them all. Theirs only protected the body from the wrath of man; but ours doth protect both ſoul and body from the wrath of an angry God. The way to it is made plain and patent; pillars are ſet up, Chriſt's miniſters to direct ſinners in the way to it. In this bleſſed city there is protection, inſtruction, proviſion and fulneſs for all that flee to it. Here is all our hope of ſalvation, and it is in vain to hope for ſafety any where elſe. Now, communicants, this bleſſed hope is ſet before you; come, lay hold of it, and cleave faſt to it. Now the city is ſet on a hill, the way to it prepared, and the gates open: The goſpel trumpet is ſounded, and proclamation made, whoſoever flees to the city, be his caſe what it will, ſhall in no wiſe be caſt out.

Under the law, he that ſaw his danger, and fled to the city of refuge, did firmly believe there was ſafety and ſecurity for him by public authority in that privileged place, if he could but get into it in time before the avenger of blood did overtake him: Therefore he earneſtly deſired to be at once within the gates of it, and for that end put forth his utmoſt vigour in running. He did not linger, halt, nor ſit down by the way; nor would he turn aſide to any crooked by-path that might lead

lead him about, but kept the ſtraight and neareſt way to the city, as the pillars ſet up directed him. No perſuaſion of any man could make him look or flee to any other city, caſtle, or hiding place for ſafety, but to the city authorized by law. In like manner, let every convinced ſinner learn from this, to flee to Jeſus Chriſt our ſafety from wrath, as the only Refuge appointed by God for him. Look, deſire, and pant earneſtly to be within the gates. O ſinner, run with ſpeed, now the gates are wide open in the word and in the ſacrament. Put forth your utmoſt vigour, and eſcape for your life. Do not linger nor delay, but flee as one that ſees juſtice cloſe at your heels. Avoid all other ſhelters and by-ways for relief; away with carnal company, ſinful pleaſures, worldly mirth or diverſion; nay, take no ſhelter in your own duties and performances; believe that none of theſe can ſkreen or protect you from the ſword of juſtice, and that none elſe can, but he who is the "Lord our righteouſneſs."

Of old, nothing could ſtop the man when flying to the city of refuge; had his wife and children hung about him, or his own heart ſuggeſted to him, will you leave your houſe, your garden, lands, relations, and many accommodations, and go to a ſtrange city and ſpend your days? He would have flung them all from him, and taken flight, ſaying to wife and children, better part with all things, than part with my life; if you will not follow me, I muſt leave you all behind. So let awakened ſouls flee with ſpeed and reſolution to Jeſus Chriſt; ſay to the world's profits, ſin's pleaſures, ſatan's allurements, and whatever would tempt you to ſtay behind, "Get you hence;" away with every thing that would hinder me from Chriſt. My Saviour and my ſoul are more precious to me than all the world; take all things from me, and give me Chriſt. How great was Jerom, one of the ancient fathers, his love to Chriſt? How ſtrong was his reſolution, when he ſaid, "If my father were weeping on his knees before me, my mother hanging about my neck behind me, my brethren, ſiſters and kinsfolk, howling on every ſide to retain

retain me from Chriſt, I would caſt my mother to the ground, run over my father, and deſpiſe all my kindred, tread all under my feet, and run to Chriſt."

O awakened ſoul, behold how Chriſt diſplays his love to thee in the ſacrament; he opens his wounds to be a refuge and hiding-place to thee, and calls aloud to thee to come and flee in thither: "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" To whom will ye flee for help, when the avenger of blood is at your heels, if you flee not to Chriſt the only refuge from wrath? Hills and mountains, ſeas and depths, heaven and earth, cannot hide thee from the ſtorm, if Chriſt do it not. Now, you have a noble opportunity, while the clefts of Chriſt's wounds ſtand open, and the "bleſſed hope is ſet before you," in the ſacrament, and Chriſt ſtretching out his hand, and waiting to ſee who will riſe and flee to him! O to ſee ſouls riſing in flocks, and flying as doves to their windows! What a pleaſant ſight would this be!

O ſaith one, I can't riſe, my wings are clipt, my ſoul clogged, I can't mount up. *Anſ.* If you can't mount up as with eagles wings, ſee if you can run to Chriſt, and kneel before him, like that young man, Mark x. 17. *Object.* I find myſelf ſo burdened and heavy laden, that I cannot run. *Anſ.* Then ſhew a willingneſs to run to Chriſt; and cry, "Draw me, and I will run after thee;" even a deſire to run will be accepted, as of thoſe in Neh. i. 11. *Object.* But, ſaith one, My heart is ſo dead and ſluggiſh, I have neither ſtrength nor will to run to Chriſt. *Anſ.* If you cannot run, then ſee if you can but *go* towards him; for we read in Jer. ii. 2. Thoſe *who went after him in the wilderneſs*, were accepted of him. *Object.* Alas, ſaith one, I am ſo weak and feeble, I cannot go. *Anſ.* Then endeavour to *creep* and move towards him as you can. *Object.* But I am ſo lame and impotent both in hands and feet, that I can't creep nor move. *Anſ.* If you cannot move to Chriſt, then *look to him* as the Iſraelites did when ſtung with fiery ſerpents. Chriſt calls every feeble ſoul to do it, Iſa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth;" and would you have Chriſt come any lower than a look? O look-

up

up to Jeſus as lifted up upon the pole of the croſs, for all nations to behold him. *Object.* My eyes are dim, the croſs far off; Jeruſalem, where it was ſet up, is out of ſight. *Anſ.* The pole of the goſpel and of the ſacrament, on which Chriſt is now lifted up, is near hand; look up to him thereon, and be ſaved. *Object.* Saith one, I am ſo burdened with guilt, I cannot lift up mine eyes. *Anſ.* Then ly low before him like the humble publican, who was ſo burthened that he was aſhamed to lift up his eyes to heaven, and under a deep ſenſe of his vileneſs, cried, "God be merciful to me a ſinner," and ſo doing was accepted: In like manner, humble yourſelf before a merciful Redeemer, and plead his promiſe, Mat. xi. 28. Truſt his word for eaſe and reſt to your burdened ſoul.

ADVICE X.

From John iii. 14. *Even ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up.*

THE lifting up the *brazen ſerpent* upon a pole, to heal ſerpent-ſtung Iſraelites, was a type of the lifting up of Chriſt on the croſs, to heal convinced ſinners of their wounds by ſin. As there was but one brazen ſerpent for healing the whole camp of Iſrael; ſo Chriſt crucified is the only Remedy and Saviour for a loſt world. "He muſt be lifted up;" his dying on the croſs was neceſſary to fulfil his engagements from eternity to be our Surety; he muſt be offered up as a Sacrifice to ſatisfy divine juſtice for the ſins of men, ſeeing nothing elſe could do. Though Chriſt's engagement to ſuffer for us was entirely voluntary at firſt; yet having once undertaken, it became neceſſary for him to be lifted up. And glory to him that would not go back from his word, however great his ſufferings were.

Come, then, O communicants, behold and conſider, with ſuitable thoughts and affections, your *lifted up Jeſus* dying on the croſs. After he had borne the heavy croſs

croſs on his bleeding ſhoulders up mount Calvary, this croſs muſt next bear him upon the top of the mount, being firſt nailed to it, and lifted up with it. Come, ſee how this was done; behold the croſs tree laid down upon the ground, and the Lord Jeſus ſtript naked, laid on his back, with hands and feet ſtretched out upon the tree, that they might take the meaſure of his body, and mark the holes for the nails! And, lo! they take the meaſure longer than the truth, that they might both crucify and rack him at once, till his bones ſhould go out of joint: ſo the croſs was a rack as well as a death. Our firſt parents ſtretched forth their guilty hands to take the forbidden fruit from the tree; therefore our glorious Saviour did willingly ſtretch forth his innocent hands to be nailed to the tree, to ſatisfy for their guilt. Come ſee four big nails driven into his hands and feet, the moſt ſinewy and ſenſible parts of his body, and faſtened to the tree; apply your ear, and hear the hideous ſound of the hammers knocking in theſe nails! Oh, your ſins were the hammers that did it, mourn for them.

Come next, and ſee the Lord of glory, when nailed faſt to the tree, lift up with it on high, and made to ſtand upright to the view of all the world! and then the front of the tree let fall down with violence into the deep hole they had digged to faſten it, which fall did unſpeakably increaſe his torments, and rend the four wounds made by the nails. Thus his own weight became his torture, ſtill widening the wounds more and more, till all his precious blood ſtreamed out at them. Behold your great Immanuel lift up on a croſs betwixt heaven and earth, as if he had been unworthy of a place in either, hanging betwixt two thieves, as if he had been the greateſt malefactor of the three! O what a ſpectacle was your Redeemer to both heaven and earth, when thus lifted up! an aſtoniſhment to angels! a deriſion to the wicked! compunction to believers! but a Sacrifice acceptable to the juſtice of his eternal Father.—Look on this moving ſpectacle with deep ſorrow for ſin, that faſtened him to the tree, and made him hang on theſe tormenting nails for ſeveral hours without comfort, inward or outward! No way could he turn

for eaſe, being fixed to the tree; if he ſtirred his bleſſed body at all, he was tormented afreſh by the wounds of his hands and feet, on which the whole weight of his body did hang. If he moved his head, which had the crown of thorns on it, the thorns would but pierce into it the deeper; yet, for all this, he complained not; no groan or ſigh was heard from him, but what he offered up to God for your ſins!

When the Son of man was thus lifted up, obſerve how the ſtreams of his precious blood run down to the ground, and ſtood in a little pool at the foot of the croſs, until the earth drank it up. Let this ſight affect your hearts, and open all the ſprings of ſorrow for ſin that pierced him. Sit down at the foot of the croſs, and receive this ſacred blood, as it falls, upon your hard hearts; let it drop on them, until it make them as ſoft as the ground it fell on. Let it drop on all the ſores and wounds of your ſouls, for it is the balm that muſt heal them. Obſerve alſo the great extent of Chriſt's ſufferings at this time; they reached to all the parts of his body, and to all the powers of his ſoul: He ſuffered in all his ſenſes; his *ſeeing*, with the ſcornful geſtures of his enemies; his *hearing*, with their ſcoffs and blaſphemies; his *ſmell*, with the noiſome ſtench of Golgotha; his *taſte*, with gall and vinegar; his *feeling*, with the piercing nails and thorns. Behold his *hands*, that were ſtill beſtowing bleſſings, now fixed with nails; his *feet*, that walked in God's ways, now digged through; his *bowels*, that yearned for ſinners, now ſhrunk and dried up; his *lips*, that ſpoke as never man ſpoke, now ſwollen with blows. Now he ſuffered on the croſs, till "his ſtrength was dried up like a potſherd, and his tongue cleaved to his jaws" The fire of God's wrath ſcorched him inwardly, which made him cry out, "I thirſt." His enemies mingled, at this time, a cup of vinegar and gall to him, which he refuſed; but glory to him, he refuſed not the cup which his Father mingled to him, though filled with wrath and curſes: This he drank for us, though it filled his whole ſoul with anguiſh, and made him roar and complain of his Father's deſerting him: "The arrows of the Almighty were within him, the poiſon whereof drank up his Spirit."

rit." Amidſt theſe fearful ſufferings, our lifted up Jeſus expired, willingly offering up himſelf on the croſs, a propitiatory Sacrifice for us.

O believers, did Chriſt lift up himſelf as a willing Sacrifice for you on the croſs; ſee then to lift up the gates of your ſouls to receive in this Saviour; let him have a joyful welcome into your ſouls, and give him the beſt entertainment, the beſt affections, and the beſt ſervice. Did he willingly ſtretch out his arms to be nailed to the croſs for you? Then be not unwilling to ſtretch out the arms of faith to embrace him; but ſee to embrace him wholly in all his offices, of Prophet, Prieſt, and King. Be willing to be taught, ſaved, and ruled by him.

Was Chriſt lifted up on the croſs (as the brazen ſerpent was lift up in the wilderneſs) for healing all the ſtings and wounds given us by ſin and Satan? O then look up to him with the eye of faith for healing This is the great remedy of God's contriving and providing, put ſtrong confidence in it, and look to it with hope and expectation: Never diſtruſt the virtue of God's Remedy, nor deſpair of healing from it, however deep your ſtings, or large your wounds be: For Chriſt was lifted up to be a remedy for the chief of ſinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. and none ever periſhed that looked to him. Was Chriſt willing to be lift up to ſuffer for you? Then let your hearts be lift up to ſerve and obey him, like king Jehoſhaphat, whoſe "heart was lift up in the ways of the Lord," 2 Chron. xvii. 6. Lift up your hearts with your voice in his praiſe; ſpeak of the glorious honour of his Majeſty, and make known his mighty acts. Obey his commands, and particularly his dying command; to remember him at his table with activity and delight. Go with lift up hearts to a communion-table, to remember him that went ſo willingly to be lifted up on a bloody croſs for you. The ancient exhortation to communicants was, SURSUM CORDA, "Lift up your hearts to meet with a lift up Jeſus."

ADVICE XI.

From Exod. xiv. 15. *Speak unto the children of Iſrael, that they go forward.*

THIS is the anſwer of Moſes's prayer for Iſrael, when in a great ſtrait at the Red-Sea. It is ſaid, he cried to God; yet we read not of one word he ſpake: He only lift up his heart to God, who well underſtands the language of the heart. Moſes's ſilent prayers of faith prevailed more with God than Iſrael's loud outcries of fear. A believing communicant may, in a ſtrait, cry to God in prayer, without ſpeaking a word, ſo did Moſes for fainting Iſrael. When they came out of the land of bondage, and fled from Pharaoh's tyranny, the Lord ordered them to march toward the ſea; but now, when they are near to it, and ſee Pharaoh's mighty army purſuing and cloſe at their heels, they are in a great ſtrait what courſe to take; they think certainly they muſt turn either to the right or left hand to make their eſcape from Pharaoh. No, ſaith God, ſpeak to them to "go ſtill forward," as ſtraight towards the ſea, as if they ſaw a fleet of tranſport ſhips there waiting to take them in. O might they think, "This is a hard command, "Go forward," when we ſee nothing but the deep devouring ſea before us; as good go back to the Egyptians, or ſtand ſtill until they come up and put us to the ſword, as go forward into the ſea and be drowned. Will the deep ſea have any more mercy on us than the cruel Egyptians? But, ſaith the Lord, make no objections, aſk no queſtions, let the people go forward, obey my command, and truſt me with their lives.

Obſerve here, O timorous communicant, O doubting believer, when you are in fears and ſtraits with reſpect to the management or ſucceſs of your duty, you are to ſet yourſelves to obey God's command, "go forward," in the uſe of means, with a ſincere heart, and leave

leave the event to God. You may poſſibly, at this time, be brought to the ſtraitning caſe of the children of Iſrael, when at the Red-ſea, and their hearts in great perplexity, ready to ſink within them for fear. Some may be ſaying within themſelves, how ſhall ſuch a vile, black unworthy creature *go forward* to the red-ſea of Chriſt's blood, who have both ſpilt it and deſpiſed it? How ſhall I, after all, venture to *go forward*, to waſh or bathe my unclean ſoul in it? Well, it is God's plain command to you to *go forward* to it, however heavy loaden you be with guilt, ſee 1 John iii. 23. Matth. xi. 28. John i. 29. others as vile and black have obeyed his command, have gone forward to this red-ſea, and been waſhed in it, ſee 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. 11 yea we read, Acts ii. 36. of three thouſand of thoſe who actually imbrued their hands in this blood, who were waſhed by it. How wonderful is its virtue! it is able to take away the ſins of a whole world, and much more the ſins of a few; therefore do not, O ſinner, rebel againſt God's command any longer.

Again, conſider what is God's ſpecial command to thee at this time, namely, "Do this in remembrance of me;" his precept is plain and expreſs to keep up the memory of his love to loſt men. Can you think to look on his face with comfort at the laſt day, if you have no pleaſure to remember him now: Surely his preſence will be terrible then to thoſe, to whom his memory is not delightful now. But you may have ſtraits and difficulties about this duty, O faith one, "My ſtrait is great, I know not what to do; whether to ſtay back from God's holy table, or go forward: If I ſtay back, I diſobey my dying Saviour's command to ſhew forth his death in this manner: If I go forward unworthily, I contract the guilt of his body and blood, and eat and drink my own damnation. Alas, what ſhall I do? my need of Chriſt and his blood is ſo great, I cannot think of ſtaying back; and yet my preparation is ſo little, I know not how to go forward. Ah! my unworthineſs is great, how ſhall I go to the table of ſo great a King in the ſtate and caſe I am in, ſo vile, ſo ſinful, ſo indiſpoſed, ſo hard-hearted? If the woman that had

had the bloody iſſue, feared ſo much to come and touch the hem of Chriſt's garment; how much more may I, who am full of the running iſſues of ſin, fear to go forward to touch the ſacred ſymbols of his body and blood, and put my hand into his wounds, and feel the print of the nails?" Come, then, unworthy as you are, obey Chriſt's command, and venture your ſoul in his hand: Go forward with all the preparation you can attain to, deeply ſenſible of your own vileneſs, and humbled for your ſhort-comings, truſting in the worthineſs of the Lamb that was ſlain to anſwer for your unworthineſs, in his blood to waſh away pollution, and in his ſtrength to help your weakneſs. Venture forward, ſaying like Jehoſhaphat, "Lord, I have no ability, no might for this great ordinance, neither know I what to do; but my eyes are unto thee, it is in thy name, in thy ſtrength, and at thy command, that I go forward to remember a dying Jeſus at his holy table. Lord, put on me the wedding-garment, prepare, receive, and welcome me."

Object. Some may ſay, They are only the children of Iſrael, who, in the text, are bid *go forward;* and we are afraid we are none of theſe. *Anſ.* All are bidden, without exception, to come to Chriſt, yea, even the ſtout-hearted are called to go to him. Now, if you come to Chriſt, it will be a ſure proof of your being Iſrael's children, and among thoſe who are bid go forward. Miniſters indeed have a ſpecial commiſſion to ſpeak to the children of Iſrael, that they go forward to this table; whoever ſtay back, they ought not.

Queſt. Who are thoſe that may be numbered among Iſrael's children, or the ſeed of Jacob? *Anſ.* The children of Jacob or Iſrael, if they be of the true kind, will be like their father, particularly in theſe things: 1. Jacob was a great wreſtler with God in prayer, and hence he got the name of Iſrael; he wept and made ſupplication at Bethel, and prevailed as a prince with God, which is the meaning of the name Iſrael. Now, if you be wreſtlers with God, you are Iſrael's children, and called to go forward. 2. Jacob was a plain man; ſo he is called, Gen. xxv. 27. that is a ſingle-hearted man: It was by this character that Chriſt deſcribes a true

true Iſraelite, John i. 47. "Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Now, if you ſtudy godly ſincerity, and plain dealing in your behaviour both to God and man, you are Iſrael's children, and called to go forward. 3. Jacob had faith in Chriſt, and believing views of him as the glorious Shiloh; he waited for his coming, drew his comfort from it, and rejoiced in the gathering of the people to him. If it be ſo with you, then we bid you go forward. 4. Iſrael and his children were God's covenanted people; they chuſed God for their God, and gave themſelves up to him: If it be ſo with you, you are Iſrael's children, go forward. 5. Jacob was zealous for reformation, both with reſpect to himſelf and his family, and cauſed them put away all their idols, cleanſe themſelves, and change their garments, when going to renew covenant with God, Gen xxxv. 2. Now, if you ſtudy ſincerely to follow his example, you are among the children of Iſrael, to whom God warrands miniſters to ſpeak, and bid them go forward to his table. Now, if you have any of the foreſaid five characters, in Chriſt's name we can promiſe you welcome to his table. Go forward to it then, with hearts burning with love to Chriſt and to his people; go with thankfulneſs and praiſe to God for providing ſuch a Saviour, and ſpiritual feaſt for you; and go with hunger and thirſt to partake of it. Go forward with humility and ſelf denial, renouncing all confidence in your preparations and performances, and depending only upon Chriſt's mediation for acceptance with God.

ADVICE XII.

From John xii. 32. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

AS the ſacrifices under the law were heaved and lifted up before the Lord; ſo Chriſt the Antitype muſt be lifted up on the croſs as the atoning Sacrifice for our ſins. The Jews were not more willing to lift him up,

up, than he was to lift himſelf; he readily undertook to be lift up, *Lo I come*, ſaid he; he willingly carried his croſs to the place, that he might be lift up on it. He diſſuades the women to weep for him. Why? Becauſe I am going to be lift up a Sacrifice to juſtice for your ſins, and to draw your ſouls unto me.

Queſt. But how doth he draw all men, when ſatan keeps many ſtill faſt in his grips. *Anſ.* Chriſt was lifted up to obtain drawing offers and invitations to all men without exception, and accordingly gives drawing calls to all men in his word; and if they be not drawn to him it is their own fault. But though many be called, and multitudes flock to the word; yet there are none effectually drawn to Chriſt but the elect; and theſe may be called all men, as they are gathered out of all nations, kindreds and languages, ages, ſexes and qualities. All men, Gentiles as well as Jews: All ſorts of men, ſinners of all ſizes, greater as well as leſſer. *Queſt.* But how doth the lifting up of Chriſt draw ſinners effectually to him? *Anſ.* By the merit of his lift up ſacrifice, he obtained the removal of all hinderances of their coming to him, ſuch as the guilt of their ſins, the enmity of their natures, the power of their corruptions, their unbelief, hardneſs, blindneſs and diſcouraging fears. And likewiſe by it he purchaſed all the means requiſite for drawing men to him, ſuch as the preaching of the goſpel, ſanctified rods, the grace of faith, and, above all, the powerful influences of the holy Spirit. As Chriſt was *lifted up* on the croſs, ſo he muſt alſo be *lift up* on the pole of the goſpel, for drawing ſinners to him. Thus, the brazen ſerpent was lift up in the wilderneſs, for drawing the ſtung Iſraelites about it, and it proved moſt effectual for that end; ſo a crucified Jeſus held out and evidently ſet forth in the goſpel, as he was lifted up on a bloody croſs, with his pierced hands ſtretched out to embrace loſt ſinners, is ſurely the moſt attractive and drawing ſight in the world. This wonderful Loadſtone hath drawn thouſands of hard *iron hearts* to it at once. A natural loadſtone, though it draw iron to it; yet it may

be

be drawn away from it again: But a crucified Chriſt draws the heart ſo powerfully and cloſely to him, that they can never be ſeparated again. Never was there ſuch a drawing engine in the world as this! A lift up ſtandard or enſign draws numbers of ſcattered ſoldiers unto it, but it is ſeen by few: But a crucified Jeſus lift up in the goſpel, is an enſign to draw great multitudes in different nations under the banner of love, Iſa. xi. 10. The firſt experiment that was made of its virtue in Jeruſalem by the Apoſtle Peter, three thouſand ſouls were drawn to Chriſt at once, and after that many nations that knew him not, did run unto him. Come then, O ſinners, admire and experience the power of this lift up Enſign; let your iron hearts be drawn by this Loadſtone; it hath loſt nothing of its virtue to this day. Thouſands of hearts in other places do ſtill feel its power; we are ſometimes refreſhed with the welcome news of their being drawn off from the vanities of time, and the love of ſin, to glorious Chriſt: Why then do not your hearts alſo yield to the power of this bleſſed Loadſtone, Chriſt crucified lift up in the word and ſacrament? It hath the ſame virtue here as elſewhere, were but the eyes of faith opened to behold it, according to that alluring call, Iſa. xiv. 22.

When Chriſt was lifted up on the croſs, his face was turned to the Gentiles, for the Jews out of malice (as ſeveral write) would have him crucified with his face toward the weſt, as reckoning him unworthy to look to the temple and holy city that ſtood on the eaſt ſide of mount Calvary; but Chriſt had a loving deſign in it to us Gentiles, and to accompliſh that word, Pſal. lxvi. 7. "His eyes behold the nations." Behold, O ſinners, Chriſt turned his face to you on the croſs to draw you unto him; there he bowed his head toward you to draw you; there he opened a cleft in his ſide to draw you; there blood and water flowed from his heart to draw you to him! And now he hath ſent his word and Spirit to draw you: Now he diſplays his blood and wounds in the ſacrament to draw you; now he is caſting his cords of love about your hearts to draw you to him; now the devil is holding, and Chriſt drawing; Chriſt

and the devil are now ſtruggling for your hearts; the eyes of many are on you, the eyes of the glorious Trinity, the eyes of angels, the eyes of miniſters and ſaints are on you, to ſee what the iſſue of the combat ſhall be, which of them ſhall gain the prize. Satan indeed is the ſtrong man, but, glory to God, Chriſt is ſtronger than he. O that he may prevail, the heart is his by right, ſurrender it to him without delay. He will not enter without your conſent; his people muſt all be "made willing in the day of his power." Oh, if the will were once conquered, the day were Chriſt's, and the field were won for ever.

Would you then have ſatan defeated, your biaſſed will overcome, and your ſouls ſavingly brought to Chriſt, O look up and cry for a draught of Chriſt's power. You have neither ſtrength nor will to come to a crucified Chriſt, unleſs he draw you. Ordinances or providences cannot draw you, the word or ſacraments cannot draw you, judgments or mercies cannot do it; yea, neither miniſters nor angels can draw your dead and heavy hearts. O then look beyond them all to a lift-up Immanuel, "Draw me, Lord, and I will run after thee." The ordinance you have in view can never be a drawing ordinance, if Chriſt put not forth his virtue with it; the ſacrament will be lifeleſs, and the adminiſtrators lifeleſs, if Chriſt draw you not. The moſt powerful ſermons, the moſt alluring calls, will all be loſt, if he draw not. You will ſit ſtill in the Sodom of a natural and wrathful ſtate, if he draw not; you will die in your ſins, if he draw not; you will be eternally damned, if Chriſt draw you not to him. You can never overcome the ſtrong and ſubtile temptations ſatan caſts in your way; you can never deny ſelf, forſake beloved luſts, renounce juſtification by works, quite all confidence in your own doings, go naked and empty to Chriſt, be content to live wholly upon his righteouſneſs, and receive grace, life, ſtrength, and glory, as a free gift from Chriſt, without the drawing influence of a lift up Saviour. Oh, if you were once acquainted with this drawing power, you might go with comfort to his table, and feed upon his purchaſe.

Queſt.

Queſt. How ſhall I know, if I have yet been drawn effectually to a lift-up Jeſus.

Anſ. Try it by theſe marks, Have you diſcovered his matchleſs excellency, ſo as to draw off your hearts from ſin and the periſhing things of the world? Have you felt the cords of his love about your heart and will, conſtraining you to yield yourſelf wholly to him? Is your heart drawn out in love and affection to a crucified Chriſt above all things, ſo that the deſire of your ſoul is to him and the remembrance of his name? Are you growing ſtill liker to him, more holy, more humble, meek, and heavenly minded? Nearneſs will breed likeneſs. Are you troubled for diſtance from Chriſt, when at any time you are drawn off him by ſin, ſatan, or the world's allurements? Are you drawn to duty with a view of enjoying his preſence therein? In the mean time, are you drawn off from reſting on duties, or putting any attainments in Chriſt's room? Then you may conclude your heart is effectually drawn by a lift-up Saviour; and ſo may, with holy confidence and joy, draw near to him in the ſacramental tryſting-place, and hold communion with him there.

ADVICE XIII.

From John i. 36.—xix. 5. *Behold the Lamb of God.*—*Behold the Man.*

O COMMUNICANTS, both John and Pilate call you to behold Chriſt ſuffering and ſacrificed for you, and, which is more, the Spirit of God calls you to this duty alſo. Let each one of you then ſay with Moſes, Exod. iii. 3. "I will now turn aſide, and ſee this great ſight." A great ſight indeed! For though he be called a Lamb, and a Man, he is alſo God, God in human nature, ſuffering, bleeding, and dying, a great and wonderful ſight! all the Perſons of the glorious Trinity call you to behold it, Iſa. xlii. 1.—xlv. 22. John i. 29. Draw then as near as poſſible, that you may get a good view

of it; ſtand not at a diſtance like thoſe who followed him from Galilee to the croſs, of whom it is ſaid, Luke xxiii. 49. "They ſtood afar off beholding theſe things." Do not now ſtand afar off, nor take a far off look of a crucified Chriſt, but come cloſe to him by faith, and take a near and ſaving look of him, as he calls you, Iſa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ſaved; I am God, and there is no Saviour beſide me. O then turn not your back or ſhoulder to him, look not aſquint to him, look not by him to other things; but look with a broad, ſtraight, and ſteady look unto him. The Man Chriſt Jeſus is the Lamb of God, appointed by him to be ſacrificed to make atonement for our ſins, and to purchaſe pardon, life and ſalvation, to us: And looking to him by faith, is the great mean of ſecuring and applying the bleſſings of his purchaſe to us. And in a ſpecial manner he calls us to look unto him in his ſufferings for us, *Behold me, behold me!*

Behold the ſuffering Man, a man of ſorrow indeed! And particularly behold him entering upon that fearful ſcene in the garden of Gethſemane, when he began to fear, turn ſorrowful, and very heavy: When he was ſore amazed, fell into an agony and bloody ſweat, and cried out, "My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death!" O what was it that made your Saviour ſo heavy, but the dead weight of the elect's ſins, with the law's heavy curſes annexed to them? Oh, your ſouls were exceeding guilty, which made his ſoul exceeding heavy. Behold and ſee your ſorrowful Redeemer falling into a fearful agony, and, while in it, falling down ſometimes on his knees, and ſometimes on his face, praying once, praying again, and praying the third time, until he is quite overwhelmed with wrath, and covered with his own blood! Behold the ſorrowful Man with the great drops of blood ſtanding above his garment for your ſins, and bedewing the ground! See Jehovah now acting againſt him, as an inexorable Judge, running on him as a giant, and making him the butt of his envenomed arrows! Behold him in his agony making his moan to his diſciples, who could make no help to him; for neither they nor the angels in heaven durſt touch his load,

loud, nor taſte his cup: Yea, he got not ſo much as ſympathy from his diſciples; they all fell aſleep when he was at the worſt, and left him in his agony to ſtruggle and tread out the wine-preſs alone! O be not idle ſpectators of your Saviour's agony, but let your ſouls be exceedingly affected with Chriſt's ſoul-ſuffering for your ſouls ſins.

"Behold the Man-Chriſt," betrayed and ſold for a little money, apprehended and bound with cords like a thief, and bound faſt, as Judas bade; yea, ſo faſt, (as ſome ſay) that the blood burſt out of his tender hands! O can your heart or eyes hold to ſee thoſe hands that made the heavens, wrung together and bruiſed with hard cords! To ſee him bound as a priſoner, that came to ſet the priſoners free! But had not the cords of your Redeemer's love held him faſter than the cords of his enemies, though they had been cables or chains, they could not have kept him; but his love to you made him a willing priſoner! "Behold the Man," blindfolded, mocked, buffeted and abuſed for you! Behold him ſtript naked and ſcourged! Behold him that clothes the lilies of the field, that made coats of ſkin to clothe our firſt parents, now ſtript and uncloathed himſelf! He is ſtript naked, that you might not be found naked at God's bar! He is ſtript of his robes, that he might provide a robe of righteouſneſs to cover your nakedneſs! "Behold the Man," ſcourged by Pilate, and that above meaſure, thinking thereby to ſave his life; but as the Jews were not ſatisfied therewith, ſo neither was infinite juſtice ſatisfied; ſo that his life muſt go, and the Man-Chriſt is willing it ſhould. Willingly did he give his back to the ſmiters, that you might be freed from the everlaſting laſhes of God's wrath in hell! Behold every part of his bleſſed body torn and wounded by ſcourgings, becauſe every part of you was wounded by ſin; and his ſtripes were the only cure for your wounds.

"Behold the Man," with a platted crown of thorns on his bleſſed head, with the ſharp points turned inward, and theſe beat into his head with a ſtaff, till all his head is but as one wound, from whence a new ſhower of blood ran down his neck for you! You may be ready

to

to cry, Fy on the Jews, or fy on the ſoldiers that uſed our Saviour ſo; but rather cry, Fy on your ſins that did worſe to him, theſe platted the crown of thorns and crucified him too. Behold the Lamb of God, now willingly caught in the thickets, like the ram, to be ſacrificed in your room, when you were bound like Iſaac for that end. Behold him willing to wear a crown of pain and ignominy, that you might wear a crown of glory and renown: Willing to be diſgraced and affronted, that you might be honoured and exalted: Willing to let a Barabbas, the vileſt malefactor in all Jeruſalem, be preferred before him, that you might be preferred to a room among God's children. "Behold the Man," after all theſe ſufferings, put to bear the heavy croſs on his ſore wounded ſhoulders, a heavy load, indeed, with the elect's ſins and law's curſes faſtened to it; yet he bears without complaint till his ſtrength is ſpent, and he is ready to faint under the burden, ſo that another muſt help! Oh! it was not the weight of the tree that made him faint; he had a greater burden to bear than ten thouſand worlds, even the infinite wrath of God due to the elect's ſins? O can you behold this ſight with dry eyes!

"Behold the Man" brought to Golgotha, nailed to the tree, lifted up, and drinking out the bitter dregs of the cup of wrath thereon, till at length he yielded himſelf priſoner to death, by bowing his head, giving death his orders to execute his commiſſion, and carry him off the ſtage! Behold and wonder at the ſight, the Lord of life death's taken priſoner? O man, canſt thou ſtand and ſee the Lamb of God ſlain in thy room, and for thy ſins, and not be affected! Write that man a beaſt, a ſtone, a lump of earth, that can be ſenſeleſs, ſtupid and unconcerned at ſuch a ſight! O bluſh and be aſhamed, O man, at thy ſtupidity, when the dead earth and rocks about Jeruſalem quaked and rent at the ſufferings you now behold repreſented in the ſacrament. O curſed ſin, (which many make light of) that could not be expiated by any other ſacrifice than that of our Immanuel, the Lamb of God, the Man Chriſt Jeſus? O behold the Man and tremble at ſin, the accurſed thing that

that murdered the Son of God, the Man that is God's Fellow, the Man that is infinitely preferable to a million of worlds full of men and angels too. O that men would always look on ſin in the glaſs of the agonies and ſufferings of the Man Chriſt, that they might be filled with horror at it, as at hell itſelf! Nay, in ſeveral reſpects ſin is a greater evil than hell.

Let every communicant, every Chriſtian, come and behold the glorious Son of God, with the greateſt love and admiration, who for our ſakes was willing to become a Man, and God's Lamb to be ſacrificed for the ſins of men. O let his name Jeſus be always to you as precious ointment poured forth, and let the remembrance of his love inflame your ſouls with a vehement indignation againſt ſin, and a burning affection to the Lamb of God, the Man Chriſt, that was willing to ſtruggle in bloody agonies, and bleed to death on the curſed tree to deliver you from lying in hell for ever! O what can we render to him for his free love, amazing and unſpeakable love! O that we could ſpend our whole lives in admiring his love and contemplating his beauty, and were thereby made meet, in ſome meaſure, for the exerciſe of the redeemed above. Amen.

ADVICE XIV.

From Job xxxvii. 14. *Stand ſtill and conſider the wondrous works of God.*

THE works of God, being wondrous, do well deſerve our moſt ſerious conſideration; but ſo wavering are our minds, we cannot conſider them aright, unleſs we ſtand ſtill and compoſe ourſelves for that end. This advice doth Elihu give to Job in the text, and Moſes gives to the children of Iſrael, Exod. xiv. 13. All God's works are wondrous, and highly worthy of our obſervation, as his works of creation and providence; and more eſpecially his works of redemption and of grace, as they are made known to us in the goſpel-diſpenſation,

penſation, and particularly in the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper. Here God calls you to ſtand ſtill, and conſider his wondrous works of redeeming wiſdom and mercy, in ſaving fallen ſinners. The work of creation is indeed moſt wonderful and ſtupenduous; but his work of redemption is far more coſtly and ſurpriſing: The one coſt him but a word of his power, but the other coſt him the death of his Son: the one is but the work of his fingers, Pſal. viii. 3. the other is the work of his arm, Luke i. 51. Much of the divine wiſdom and power is diſplayed in making us men, but much more in making us ſaints; by the one we have but a ſhort mortal life, but by the other, an eternal and immortal life. God's works of redemption and of grace will be the admiration of ſaints and angels to all eternity, Rev. v. 12. xv. 3.

Come, then, and behold theſe works of the Lord, as they are ſet forth before you in the word and ſacrament! Come and ſee God, from all eternity, paſſing by angels, and pitching his love upon poor ruined ſinners of Adam's family, and contriving their redemption by the incarnation and death of his dear Son, while he paſſed by the angels that fell. Come and ſee the glorious Son of God undertaking, in the council of peace, to become Surety to pay our debt, and ſatisfy juſtice for the injury our ſins did to God's glory! Behold and conſider the device of infinite wiſdom for reconciling juſtice and mercy about guilty men, and ſatisfying the demands of them both, by puniſhing ſin ſeverely, and yet pardoning the perſons guilty! "Stand ſtill and ſee the wondrous work" of making the Word fleſh to dwell among us; of the Creator's leaving his throne of glory to lodge in a virgin's womb, and a beaſt's manger; of the "Ancient of days" becoming "a child of a day old," learning to ſpeak and go, and ſubjecting himſelf to his own law in the room of rebel ſinners! "Behold God's wondrous work," in ſetting up a court and throne of grace among the priſoners of juſtice, and cauſing grace ſit as a queen on the throne, with a ſceptre of mercy in her hand, and thence to iſſue forth proclamations of grace to poor, wretched, blind, miſerable, and naked ſinners, proclaiming pardon to the condemned,

demned, liberty to the captives, and life to the dead; yea, ſee grace laying ſiege to the hearts of rebels, ſummoning them by the goſpel-trumpet to ſurrender, and uſing the moſt prevailing arguments with them to do it, taken from the mediation, ſufferings, blood, righteouſneſs and ſatisfaction of the Son of God.

Behold and conſider the wondrous work of God in furniſhing and fitting the Mediator for our miſerable circumſtances, joining the divine and human natures in one perſon for our relief! Obſerve how well he ſuits our exigences; he is Man, that he might die for us; and God, that he might overcome death! Man, that he might combat the devil; and God, that he might vanquiſh him! Man, that he might take on our guilt and puniſhment; and God, that he might ſupport under it! Man, that he might offer a ſacrifice for us; and God, to make it infinitely meritorious! Man, that he might ſympathiſe with us in trouble; and God, that he might deliver us!—a wondrous work indeed! Again, obſerve the Mediator's fulneſs, how exactly it ſuits our miſeries and wants! In our wonderful Immanuel, there is life for our deadneſs, light for our darkneſs, beauty for our deformity, ſtrength for our weakneſs, health for our ſickneſs, balm for our wounds, raiment for our nakedneſs, riches for our poverty, merit for our guiltineſs, righteouſneſs for our juſtification, a fountain for our pollution, grace for ſanctification, bread for our hunger, water for our thirſt, and deep mercies for our deep miſeries! a wonderful work, to make one depth ſo exactly to anſwer another depth! "This is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes."

Stand ſtill, and ſee God's wondrous work, in ſending our *Immanuel, the Prince of the kings of the earth*, to go up and down the wilderneſs ſeeking after the loſt ſheep, calling and inviting them in the moſt tender manner to come unto him for life and ſalvation, willingly ſubmitting to be buffeted by ſatan, contradicted by ſinners, to ſuffer all manner of indignities, a curſed death, and the wrath of God, and all that he might be a ſacrifice to ſatisfy juſtice for our ſins: And after

he had ſubmitted to death and the grave for a time, he conquered them and roſe again; and gave commiſſion to his ambaſſadors to go through all the earth, and call periſhing ſinners to come unto him, and offer them ſalvation in his name; and having done ſo, he aſcended into heaven to intercede for them. Now, it is incumbent upon all communicants to remember theſe amazing works of God, at his holy table, with wonder, thankfulneſs and praiſe.

Come here, and ſee the *fountain of the great depths* of infinite love broken up, and the ſtreams of the water of life running freely therefrom to the ſons of men. Come, ſee Jacob's ladder ſet up, that reaches from earth to heaven, and God the Father at the top of it, calling you to climb to heaven by the ſteps of it; viz. *Chriſt's wounds, offices, and promiſes!* Come, ſee the manna coming down in plentiful ſhowers, and falling about your tents, and every man invited to gather. Come, ſee the Rock broached in the wilderneſs, to ſupply the neceſſities of your ſouls; ſee the Rock ſmitten by the rod of Moſes, and bearing the curſes of the law for you! Come, ſee the "City of refuge" opened for poor manſlayers, that ſinners, who have ſlain their ſouls by ſin, may flee to it for ſhelter. O then flee for your lives, and do not linger by the way! Come, ſee God bringing his righteouſneſs near you who are guilty criminals, and bidding you put it on for your ſafety in judgment; it is a robe that will fit every one of you. Come, ſee the "fruits and leaves" of the Tree of Life ſhaken and ſcattered among ſtarving wounded ſouls: Gather and feed on the fruits of his purchaſe for your nouriſhment; apply the leaves of his promiſes for your healing. Come, ſee "the Well of ſalvation" opened, bring the chain and bucket of faith and draw water. The great medicine well is here, come with all your diſeaſes and ailments to it, come with your hard hearts, blind eyes, weak hands, feeble knees, lame feet and cold affections to get them healed. Come, ſee Chriſt's teſtament opened, and every man allowed to put in for a ſhare of the legacies therein contained: This you are to do by believing, claiming, laying hold and embracing

embracing the promiſes! Come, ſee ſtraying prodigals returning to their Father's houſe, and ſee their Father embracing them, and the whole family rejoicing at their return: See their filthy rags taken off, and the white robe of the Son of God put on them, and the fatted calf killed for them. Come, ſee the King of glory entering in at the everlaſting gates of mens ſouls, dethroning ſin and ſelf, taking poſſeſſion of their hearts, and ſetting up his throne and kingdom in them. Come, ſee King Solomon both crowned and married in one day! An aſtoniſhing match concluded between the Prince of life and the heir of hell! All the daughters of Zion are called forth to behold this ſight, Cant. iv. 11. All theſe are great and wondrous works of God to be ſeen in the word and ſacrament, which all communicants ought to ſtand ſtill and conſider.

Conſider theſe marvellous works ſo as to be ſuitably affected with them, make them the ſubject of your meditations; entertain high and admiring thoughts of God, and of his infinite love and wiſdom manifeſted in them. Give firm credit to the record and teſtimony God hath given us of theſe wondrous works, and glorify the great Author of them with your hearts, tongues and lives. Embrace the goſpel-offer, and be afraid of offending that God who has humbled himſelf ſo low for our ſakes, and has wrought ſuch great and wondrous works for us. Be careful to ſerve him and pleaſe him in all things, and abhor ſin his grand enemy.

ADVICE XV.

From Rev. xxii. 2. *In midſt of the ſtreet was the tree of life.*

IT was a ſad day to mankind, when God baniſhed Adam from the earthly paradiſe, and from the tree of life that grew therein, and alſo ſhut the entry to it! But behold God, in his free mercy, is now opening an entry and inviting Adam's baniſhed poſterity back again

gain to a better *paradiſe*, where there are purer delights, and neither ſin nor ſatan can enter; and where there is a *Tree of life*, *Jeſus Chriſt*, infinitely preferable to that in Adam's paradiſe. This Tree of life far excels that in its leaves, ſhadow, fruit, and virtues; it animates, yea, reſtores, and preſerves life for ever, neither is there any flaming ſword to hinder our acceſs to it. Adam's tree endured but a ſhort time, but ours laſts for ever. Other trees decay, fade, and wither, but "Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to-day and for ever." O come, then, ſit down under the ſhadow of this tree, eat of its fruit, and live for ever. Though the tree be now planted in the heavenly paradiſe, yet his branches, ſhadow, and fruit, extend to every believer on earth, as well as to the ſaints above. Thouſands of communicants at the lower table have "ſat under his ſhadow with great delight, and found his fruit ſweet to their taſte." Chriſt is a tree that bears fruit at all times, every month, and even in the ſharpeſt winter months of ſickneſs and death.

There are ſome very uſeful trees in the world, that afford all neceſſaries to men, ſuch as meat, drink, phyſic, and clothing. Behold, God hath provided ſuch a tree for us. Jeſus Chriſt affords us all theſe. 1. Meat: He tells us, That "his fleſh is meat indeed;" that is, his fleſh wounded and dying, yields ſtrengthening food for the ſoul, in reſpect of its fruits and effects. It is food well prepared; the holy Trinity ſpent a whole eternity in preparing it. It is meat well ſeaſoned; it is ſeaſoned with the love of God, ſauced with the blood of Chriſt, and ſpiced with the graces of the Spirit. 2. Drink: Chriſt's blood is alſo drink indeed to the ſoul, in reſpect to its comfortable effects; ſuch as pardon, peace, light, life, ſtrength, &c. Theſe ſtreams from the Rock are moſt refreſhing, cordial, and ſavoury drink; ſavoury to God, ſavoury to angels, and moſt ſavoury to every ſoul that hath taſted it. It is a ſweet cup that is to be put into your hand, if you have faith, but it is poiſonous to an unworthy communicant that wants faith: But, if you be worthy, the drink will poiſon ſin, quicken grace, and refreſh the ſoul. Fear not, O believer,

believer, to take a good draught, faith will make the cup medicinal and reſtorative to thy ſoul, and it will only kill and deſtroy thy luſts. 3. Phyſic: The leaves of this Tree are for the "healing of the nations:" Chriſt hath many healing promiſes, which, when applied by faith, are moſt uſeful to purge out ſin and corruption, and to heal all the ſoul's wounds and diſeaſes. 4. This Tree affords clothing alſo. Poor fallen Adam, when naked, went to the fig tree for its leaves to cover him; but, O let his poſterity go to the Tree of life, where they ſhall get infinitely better clothing, even Chriſt's perfect *righteouſneſs*, which is ſpotleſs and law-abiding. Behold *a rich robe*, ſet with the pearls and diamonds of heaven. *A large robe*, ſo broad as to cover a whole elect world. It alſo covers all the ſpots and infirmities of believers; ſo that not one of them is to be ſeen. This robe is as broad as the law, which we are told is exceeding broad. And it is juſt as beautiful as broad; for it makes every elect ſoul amiable and acceptable to God. Never then was there ſuch a Tree, either in the earthly or the heavenly paradiſe, as our glorious Tree of life, Jeſus Chriſt. O hungry ſouls, here is *meat!* O thirſty ſouls, here is *drink!* O diſeaſed ſouls, here is *medicine!* O naked ſouls, here is *clothing!* O come then to this Tree of life, and you have all things neceſſary for you.

O communicants, you are called to take a view of this bleſſed Tree, as it was hewen, mangled, and cut down by the ax of juſtice, when he died upon the croſs for you. Even in this his mangled condition, he is a moſt beautiful and engaging ſight to the eye of faith! O believer, behold your princely Jeſus lifted up on a bloody croſs, on the top of mount Calvary, for all nations to ſee him, and gather to him for food and healing. Since that mount was firſt created, it never produced ſuch a Tree, or ſuch precious fruit, as the Lord of glory hanging on the tree of the croſs, that was planted there ſome hours: Chriſt's hanging on it changed its nature from a curſed to a bleſſed tree, a Tree of life and ſalvation. This Tree of life made mount Calvary a ſweet and lovely paradiſe that day, (notwithſtanding of

of all the malefactors bones that lay ſcattered upon it) and the fruits growing on it that day hath enriched both heaven and earth, and will fill heaven with eternal ſongs of praiſe.

You are likewiſe called, at this time, to draw near a crucified Chriſt, the Tree of life, that is always laden with fruit: Come as near as poſſible you can win, ſhake the Tree by faith, and gather as much fruit as you can; eat, and lay up for after-times; yea, gather, and lay up for eternity. The fruits of this Tree are durable and laſting, plentiful and enriching, ſweet and ſatisfying, manifold and various, Rev. xxii. "twelve manner of fruits every month," which is an hundred and forty-four crops in the year. Likewiſe, they are moſt ſuitable to the wants and neceſſities of your ſouls. What can be more ſuitable to the guilty than pardon? to the dead than life? to the hungry than bread? to the thirſty than drink? to the wounded than balm? to the blind than eye-ſalve? to the naked than clothing? to the impotent than ſtrength? to the weary than reſt? to the captive than liberty? to the diſturbed than peace? to the bewildered than light? to the warrior than victory? All theſe, and innumerable more, are the ſweet and ſuitable fruits of the Tree of life.

O then, give all diligence to ſecure and clear up your intereſt in this bleſſed Tree of life and its fruits, which are now offered to you freely without money or price. Abandon and reject the ſour and unſavoury fruits of ſin, the world, and your own righteouſneſs; and embrace the Tree of life in the arms of faith, and all its fruits are yours. Come, "ſit down under his ſhadow," at his table, and believingly receive and feed on theſe delicious fruits. O how delightful and refreſhing is the ſhadow and ſhelter of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, to the ſoul that hath been ſcorched with a ſenſe of divine diſpleaſure for ſin? This ſhadow ſkreens and protects him from the heat of God's wrath, from the curſes of a fiery law, and from the ſaviſh fears of death, and wrath-like diſpenſations. Then let every weary and ſcorched ſoul come at Chriſt's call, and ſit down under his ſhadow: Give firm credit to the goſpel report concerning Chriſt's

Chriſt's ſuretyſhip, his ſufficient righteouſneſs, and free offers: Acquieſce heartily in this bleſſed contrivance of ſhelter and ſafety, and put all your truſt and confidence in his righteouſneſs alone; and abide contentedly under its ſhadow without wandering from it, or going from tree to tree, as many do, ſeeking reſt or ſhelter. Surely all who leave Chriſt, and wander after the ſhadow of creature comforts, or their own doings, for relief, will diſquiet themſelves in vain; for there is no reſt or ſhelter any where, but under the ſhadow of the Tree of life. Here only you will find protection and proviſion: This made the ſpouſe ſay, Cant. ii. 3. "I ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet to my taſte."

Let all thoſe, who have experienced the ſafety and ſweetneſs of Chriſt's ſhadow and fruit, bleſs God that gave them counſel, and drew them to this happineſs. See that you abide cloſe under this ſhadow, and make it your continual reſort. Chriſt ſpeaks to you, as David to Abiather, when he fled to him from Saul's cruelty. "Abide thou with me, fear not, for he that ſeeketh my life, ſeeketh thy life, but with me thou ſhalt be in ſafeguard." Likewiſe pity and pray for them who ſlight the Tree of life, and are going through all the trees of the wood for reſt and ſatisfaction, but cannot find it. O commend this bleſſed Tree to them, and invite them to come and ſit down under the ſhadow of it, where they will find all things. Say to them as Philip to Nathaniel, "Come and ſee." Be alſo looking out, and longing for the full enjoyment of the Tree of life in the Paradiſe above, where you ſhall eternally ſing among the branches of it, meet with all your friends, and eat the fruits with a far better appetite and reliſh than ever any did here below.

ADVICE

ADVICE XVI.

From Iſa. xxxii. 2. *A man ſhall be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt.*

WHATEVER ſtorms or tempeſts believers are expoſed to here, Chriſt is an excellent ſhelter and hiding-place from them. Before Adam's fall, that ſin entered into the world, all was calm and ſerene; but ſince that, the world is become a weary wilderneſs, full of tempeſts; and as ſoon as one is laid, another is ready to blow. There are ſtorms of outward afflictions, ſickneſs, loſſes, and diſappointments, and many wrath-like diſpenſations of providence; there are ſtorms of temptations from ſatan, challenges from conſcience, thunderings from mount Sinai, deſertions from God, reproaches and perſecutions from the world: And yet all theſe ſtorms here, are but like drops before the ſhower, if compared with the terrible ſtorm of wrath to come, which is abiding the ungodly and unbelieving. But glory to infinite wiſdom and free love, for finding out a proper Hiding-place for loſt ſinners amid theſe ſtorms, to which we are called to turn, Zech. ix. 12. "Turn ye to the ſtrong-hold, ye priſoners of hope." The Man Chriſt is an excellent Strong-hold and Hiding-place againſt all ſtorms whatſoever; in him there is ſufficient room and accommodation for us, his *wounds* are wide, his *mercy* large, his *merits* infinite, his *offers* free, his *calls* moſt gracious and extenſive, Iſa. xlv. 22. "Look to me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth." The acceſs is declared free, and the way patent, to all who turn to the Strong-hold for ſhelter, and never was any excluded that turned to it.

A crucified Jeſus, O communicants, repreſented to you in the ſacrament, is the Strong-hold and Hiding-place, to which you are called to turn by faith for ſhelter and ſafety, from the ſword of juſtice. In him there are excellent clefts for ſhelter, Cant. ii. 14. and which you

you ought to be well acquainted with. There are the clefts of his *wounds* and merits, which all *Chriſt's doves* flee to when ſtorms ariſe. There is alſo the cleft of his *power*, the clefts of his *wiſdom*, the cleft of his *love*, and the cleft of his *faithfulneſs*; many a ſtorm have they eſcaped in theſe clefts. In this hiding-place there are alſo *chambers* of ſafety, to which you may retire when the tempeſts blow, Iſa. xxvi. 20. There are the *chambers* of Chriſt's *offices* and ſweet *relations*, which he hath aſſumed for the ſafety and comfort of believers; in each of theſe many of them have found ſhelter when ſtorms have blown. There is alſo the pleaſant *chamber* of his *covenant*, with the cloſets of its *promiſes*, which afford ſweet retiring places in tempeſtuous times. O ſtudy to be acquainted with them. David was well acquainted with the well-ordered covenant and its promiſes, and had his recourſe thereto in troublous times, and particularly when he was threatened with the ſtorm of death, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "Although my houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure; this is all my ſalvation." And he pleads the promiſes of his covenant for his ſafety, Pſal. cxix. 49. "Remember the word to thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope." Come then, by the exerciſe of faith, and ſhut yourſelves up in theſe ſweet chambers at the Lord's table, and take complacency in viewing and walking through them.

Chriſt crucified is a Covert and Hiding-place to believers, and to every thing that belongs to them: He is even a Covert to their *bodies* in time of danger; ſo was he to his diſciples, when the ſtorm was breaking upon himſelf, John xviii. 8. "If ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way." But more eſpecially, he is a Covert to their *ſouls*, theſe he accounts precious as his *jewels*; he hides them in his wounds, and "keeps them by his power through faith unto ſalvation." He is alſo a Covert to their *graces*, and keeps them in life when ready to die, and ſaves them from being overwhelmed in the day of tempeſt. What had become of David and of Peter's grace, under violent ſtorms of temptation, if he

had not been a Covert to them. Many a time hath he preſerved the *ſmoking flax* and the *bruiſed reed*, under the moſt dangerous ſtorms. Likewiſe Chriſt is a Covert to their evidences and marks of grace; he preſerves them, and keeps them legible, after many blots which ſin and ſatan do caſt upon them. He hath the bleſſed art of recovering and clearing up their evidences, when they are frequently given up for loſt in times of backſliding.

Let all conſider how miſerable they are who have no intereſt in this Hiding-place; you, that are out of Chriſt, have no covert from the tempeſt; you can neither have ſafety nor comfort in times of trouble. Nay, when any ſtorm blows from without againſt you, a guilty conſcience will be ready to raiſe the ſtorm within; and alſo ſhow you a more terrible ſtorm gathering againſt you, even the wrath that is to come;—wrath, ſtill coming but never all come;—a ſtorm that will ſtill be blowing, but never will blow over. O what will become of you, if death come upon you in this ſhelterleſs ſtate, while out of Chriſt, the only hiding-place?—to be ſure, then, "hell will follow the pale horſe." To whom then will ye flee for help or ſhelter? The rocks or hills will not be a hiding-place to you, if Chriſt do not hide you. No creature will ſkreen or pity you, if Chriſt do it not. All the creatures will take part with their Creator againſt you, and, inſtead of hiding you, they will be ready to divulge and accuſe you to the purſuer, the juſtice of God. If you cry to the heavens, O cannot the vaſt expanded heavens afford me a hiding-place from the tempeſt? No, will they ſay, there is no refuge, no entrance here for the ſlighters of Chriſt, we will open only to rain fire and brimſtone, and furious ſtorms upon their heads. If you look to the air, and ſay, Is there no hiding-place through the vaſt regions of the air for me? No, the air is tranſparent, and will diſcover the criminal, and will raiſe a whirlwind of wrath to blow you into hell. If you cry to the ſea, Is there no hiding place in all the depths of the ſpacious ſea to ſhelter me from the Lamb's wrath? No, the ſea will give up her dead to be judged, and will

rage

rage furiously against you. If you look to the earth, Is there no cave nor pit in all the earth to hide me from the dreadful storm? No, the earth, instead of hiding you, will open its mouth and let you go quick down to hell, for slighting the wounds of Christ that were opened to shelter you.

O let every sinner then flee now, while it is time, to these blessed wounds of Jesus for safety: "Be of good comfort, O sinner, rise, he calleth thee;" rise and come, for there is yet room; forsake all false shelters and lying refuges. Absolute mercy, a blameless walk, convictions, resolutions, prayers, tears, ordinances, ministers, will not be a hiding-place to you, if Christ be neglected. Nothing can satisfy justice, nor screen from wrath, but the wounds and blood of the Redeemer; therefore see to make these only your covert and hiding-place.

It concerns all to try if they have got into this hiding-place, and if they be among Christ's *hidden ones*; so believers are called, Psal. lxxiii. 3. If you be among these hidden ones, you will have a hidden life, and be acquainted with a life of secret prayer and correspondence with heaven, and a life of faith and leaning upon the Son of God; you will have hidden food, meat the world knows not of, the hid manna of communion with God. You will have hidden clothing, and be acquainted with putting off your own rags, and putting on the hidden garment of Christ's righteousness. You will have hidden strength, and be acquainted with borrowing strength from Christ, both for work and warfare. You will live upon hidden supports in dark and calamitous times, and draw comfort from the promises, and make these the ground of your hope. If you be in Christ as your hiding-place, you will be among Christ's poor and needy ones, for it is to such he is a refuge, Isa. xxv. 4. Do you see your own emptiness, ill-deservings, and insufficiency, and depend upon free mercy for every crumb? Are you still begging at a throne of grace, and inclining to exalt free grace? saying, "Not unto us, but unto Christ be the glory;" he is "all our salvation and all our desire. Happy are they who can lay claim to these marks.

ADVICE XVII.

From 1 Kings xix. 9. *The Lord ſaid unto him, What doſt thou here, Elijah?*

IT is the concern of every man to be always in caſe to give account to God of his errand and deſign in every piece of work he is employed in; and ſo ought communicants at the Lord's table; when God or his miniſters aſk them, as the Lord did Elijah, "What doſt thou here, communicant?" What is your buſineſs and errand at this table? Can you ſay, I have many errands here; I come upon my Saviour's call, to celebrate the memorial of his dying love, that his name may be remembered to all generations? "And worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain," to be admired, adored, and praiſed for ever. I come alſo to ſubſcribe and ſeal a marriage-contract with him in the moſt ſolemn manner, before all the Perſons of the glorious Trinity, before the elect angels, and before all the congregation. Seeing Chriſt doth once more call me to it, after many a broken tryſt, and hath put on his marriage-robes, his dyed garments, to win and engage my heart, I come to join hands with him before God, angels, and men, and take them all witneſſes to the bargain. Surely this is a good errand: O that the long ſpoken of match may now hold.

Can you ſay, I am come to a rich and liberal Saviour, to ſupply my needs out of his fulneſs. I come on a good day, when he uſes to deal bountifully to the poor and needy, and to ſay to them, as the king to Eſther, "What is thy petition? and what is thy requeſt?" Well, is thy petition ready? Doſt thou come with the publican's petition, "God be merciful to me a ſinner?" Or with David's petition, "Lord be merciful to me; heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee?" Or with that petition, "Purge me with hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean; waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than the ſnow?" Or with that, "Let my ſoul live, and it ſhall praiſe thee?" Or, do you come with the ſpouſe's peti-

tions and requeſts; "Draw me, and we will run after thee. Awake, O north-wind; and come, thou ſouth; blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out?" Surely theſe petitions are agreeable to your Redeemer; ſee that you inſiſt upon them, and preſs for on anſwer. Study to have a lively feeling at this time af all your wants. Would you have them all ſupplied at once? Then come and embrace a crucified Jeſus in the arms of faith, and he will fully anſwer them all. Would you have all your five ſenſes ſatisfied at once? Behold Chriſt invites you to come to him to get it done. Would you have the ſenſe of ſeeing ſatisfied? Then he ſays to you, "Look to me, and be ye ſaved. Behold me, behold me! Behold king Solomon with the crown on his head!" Would you have the ſenſe of hearing ſatisfied? Then, ſaith he, "Incline thine ear; hearken to me; give ear to my voice." Would you have the ſenſe of taſting ſatisfied? He ſaith, "O taſte and ſee that God is good." Would you have the ſenſe of touching ſatisfied? He ſaith, "Reach hither thy hand, thruſt it into my ſide, feel the wounds made by the ſpear and the nails." Would you have the ſenſe of ſmelling ſatisfied? Come then to Chriſt, whoſe "name is as ointment poured forth;" and whoſe "garments ſmell of aloes, myrrh, and caſſia." Come here, and get all your ſpiritual ſenſes ſatisfied at Chriſt's full feaſt.

Object. But I am afraid I am not among theſe invited gueſts that Chriſt will make welcome. *Anſ.* Have you any of the ſcripture-characters of thoſe that Chriſt invites? Are you among his friends? Do you wiſh well to his cauſe and intereſt? Then Chriſt ſaith to you, "Eat, O friends," Cant. v. 1. Is your heart open to Chriſt's offers, and willing to accept him in all his offices? Then he ſaith to ſuch, he "will come in and ſup with them, Rev. iii. 20. Doth your heart love him? Then he ſaith, He "will manifeſt himſelf" to ſuch, John xiv. 21. Are you poor and needy? Then he ſaith, "The needy ſhall not be forgotten," Pſal. ix. 18. Do you ſee yourſelf a loſt ſinner? Then he ſaith, He is "come to ſeek and call ſuch," Luke xix. 10.

Mat.

Mat. ix. 13. Do you feel ſin to be a heavy burden? Then he bids the "heavy laden come to him," Mat. ix. 28. Are you ſick, and much diſtreſſed? Then Chriſt chuſes to entertain and converſe with ſuch, Matth. ix. 12. Do you hunger and thirſt for Chriſt? He ſaith, "He fills the hungry with good things," Luke i. 53. Are you ſenſible of backſlidings? He invites ſuch to come to him, Jer. iii. 14. Are you deſirous to put on the wedding garment of imputed righteouſneſs? Then, to be ſure, you ſhall neither be excluded nor neglected. Do you earneſtly ſeek for his holy Spirit? He aſſures you he is more willing to give the Spirit to them that aſk it, than loving parents are to give bread to their hungry children. What is mens compaſſion to their children in compariſon of Chriſt's to his? Well, then, you may reſt on Chriſt's word; for he is not more free in making promiſes, than faithful in making them good. He is a God that keeps covenant to a thouſand generations. Venture then upon his word, and come to his table with hope and expectation to get all your wants ſupplied.

Let me again aſk you, as God did Elijah, What doſt thou here, communicant! Can you ſay, that you are come to get a heart-affecting ſight of the blood and wounds of the glorious Redeemer, ſo as you may love Chriſt, and hate ſin more than ever! That is a good errand, and what God will ſurely approve. Come, then, draw near, as it were, to the foot of the croſs, and take a narrow and cloſe view of his wounds, and of the blood that ſtreams from them. Obſerve how faſt the blood runs down from his hands to the ground, faſter than ever tears ran down from your eyes for ſin, that cauſed the ſhedding of his blood! Chriſt is not ſparing of his blood for you, however ſparing you be of your tears for him. Draw yet nearer, and lay your ear to his wounds, eſpecially his five big wounds in his hands, feet, and ſide; which, like ſo many mouths, are wide opened to ſpeak to believing communicants. Liſten and hear what they ſay: What is the language of the two wounds in his hands? "Come to me, and caſt your guilty ſoul into my bleeding out-ſtretched arms," and

and I'll ſave you from the ſword of juſtice. Lay your ear to the two wounds in his feet, and hear what they ſay, "Run to me, and caſt yourſelf down at my feet, and I'll protect you from the avenger of blood. Hearken to the deep wound in his ſide, ſaying, "Flee to me, O trembling dove, and I'll ſhelter thee in this cleft of the Rock:" Thou haſt now free acceſs to the Ark, behold the window opened in the ſide of it; look in at it, and ſee my heart burning with love: Yea, thruſt in thy hand to my ſide (unbelieving Thomas) and feel my bleeding heart, how warm it is to you, and be no more faithleſs, but believing."

O communicant, can you come to the foot of Chriſt's croſs, and ſee his wounds, and hear ſuch language, and your hearts not be affected with love to Chriſt, and hatred to ſin? Can you behold Chriſt thus cruelly uſed, nailed to the tree, bleeding and dying in your room? Can you ſee the heavens turning black, the ſun drawing in its head, the earth quaking, and the rocks rending at the ſufferings of the Son of God, and your heart not quake for ſin, that awakened the ſword of juſtice againſt him as our Surety. O what cauſe have you to be aſhamed of the hardneſs and unconcernedneſs of your heart at ſuch a ſight, and to cry to God that the heart of ſtone may be changed into an heart of fleſh, and that the fire of Chriſt's love may deſcend, and kindle ſuch a flame in your ſoul, as may melt your frozen affections, and conſume the ſtubble of your luſts and corruptions. Of old the Lord uſed to anſwer his peoples prayers and ſacrifices, by fire from heaven: Pray that he may anſwer your's in like manner, by kindling a holy fire in your ſoul, as he did in the hearts of the two diſciples going to Emmaus; even a twofold fire, to wit, a fire of love to Chriſt, and a fire of indignation againſt ſin. O love the Lord Jeſus as your treaſure and portion; let your thoughts be mainly upon him, and your ſouls breathing after him. Be much concerned for his intereſt and cauſe, and for the ſpreading of his kingdom and glory in the world. And be looking out, and longing for the full and perfect enjoyment of him. Likewiſe keep up a ſtrong averſion

to

to ſin, and to what is oppoſite to Chriſt, and injurious to his intereſt and kingdom; look always upon ſin as the grand enemy and murderer of Chriſt; and therefore do not ſpare it.

ADVICE XVIII.

From John v. 6. *Jeſus ſaith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?*

THIS miraculous healing pool of Bethesda, at which the impotent man had lien thirty eight years, was a type of the Meſſiah, and the fountain of his blood opened and ſet forth in goſpel-ordinances, for healing all our ſpiritual diſeaſes. And Chriſt's method of healing this man teaches us, that if we would be healed, we muſt be willing to wait at the pool of ordinances, till the Spirit come to ſtir the waters, apply the blood, and effect the cure. And, in the mean time, we muſt be ſenſible of our diſeaſe, and look up to Chriſt, our great Phyſician, with earneſt deſires for healing. This is imported in Chriſt's queſtion, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

O communicants, you are diſeaſed by ſin, and the plagues of your hearts; theſe have blaſted the primitive beauty of the ſoul, and brought on it a ghaſtly deformity, with much pain and weakneſs. Your diſeaſes are manifold: Atheiſtical thoughts, miſbelief, and ignorance of God's truths, are woful plagues; hardneſs of heart, and earthly-mindedneſs, formality, and heart-wanderings in duty, truſting to your own righteouſneſs, ingratitude, and backſlidings from God; theſe are diſeaſes you ought all to be ſenſible of, God would have "every man to know the plague of his own heart." 1 Kings viii. 38. in order to his being made whole. Theſe are the ſick that Chriſt is ready to come to heal, Mat. ix. 12. Chriſt firſt makes men ſick and ſenſible, before he makes them whole. Have you then any acquaintance with this healthful, preparatory ſickneſs? Have you been made ſenſible of the dangerous nature of

of your diſeaſe, and thoughtful and ſolicitous about the iſſue of it? Have you been made to groan and moan under the burden of your diſeaſe, ſaying, "I am troubled and bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long?" Have you ſeen there is no healing in yourſelves, or in your convictions, prayers, tears, or reformations? and that it is only in Chriſt, who hath an infinite fulneſs of merit and Spirit to ſuit your deſperate malady? Are you willing to ſubmit to the Phyſician's preſcriptions for healing? Be the pill or potion never ſo bitter, you will ſwallow it; Is it your cry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Theſe are tokens of a right preparatory ſickneſs. May the holy Spirit work them in you.

The great meritorious means of your healing, is the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, which is ſet before you in the ſacrament, for you to look to and apply by faith. As the Iſraelites were made ſenſible of their ſtings before they looked to the brazen ſerpent for healing; ſo muſt ye in order to your prizing of Chriſt, and looking to his blood for healing your ſpiritual plagues. Now the fountain is open, and the healing ſtreams run freely on both ſides of the table: Come then, with a feeling of your diſeaſes, and bathe in them for curing your hard hearts, your blind eyes, your weak hands, your feeble knees, your lame feet, and cold affections. O impotent man, are you lying at the ſide of the pool while the waters are ſtirring? Have you no ſtrength to move forward, and is there none to put you in! O then look up to Chriſt, that healed the impotent man after many years waiting; look to him by faith, as he calls you, Iſa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth." As I offer myſelf to every diſeaſed ſoul in particular, as well as to all in general; ſo let every ſoul embrace me as his Saviour, and apply my blood to his particular diſeaſes. Faith is a healing grace, not only its touches, but its very looks, are healing; hence Chriſt ſaid to ſeverals who were healed, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." O ſee then if you have got this healing faith.

Queſt. How may I know if my faith be of this kind?

Anſ. A healing faith will make the ſoul heartily approve the goſpel-method of ſalvation, embrace God's teſtimony, and cloſe with his goſpel-offer in all reſpects. And it hath in it an appropriating truſt and confidence in the merit and virtue of Chriſt's blood, offered to the ſinner, in particular, for his pardon and healing; which makes him reſt upon Chriſt as his Saviour, and venture his ſoul and ſalvation upon his merits and promiſe. In this healing faith of a diſeaſed ſinner, there is a particular acceptance of, and confidence in a crucified Chriſt, correſponding to that free goſpel-offer which he makes of himſelf to the diſtreſſed ſoul. This faith brings him to a fixed reſolution to ly at the Phyſician's door, and depend upon him alone for healing. And it makes him caſt open all the doors and rooms of his ſoul, to receive and entertain this Phyſician. Now, O poor impotent ſoul, if there be ſuch a faith as this wrought in thee, then thy faith in Chriſt makes thee whole. The healing balm is applied, the cure begun, and ſhall ſhortly be perfected. "Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee; Jeſus Chriſt maketh thee whole."

It concerns you alſo, to try if the happy fruits and effects of this healing faith appear in you, whereby you may conclude, that the ſtrength of your diſeaſe is broken, by virtue of the blood of Chriſt; and that you have got it applied for curing your heart-atheiſm, hardneſs, unbelief, pride, carnality, and particularly your weakneſs of hands, and feebleneſs of knees: So that, though formerly they were ſo weak and feeble, that you could not lift up the one, nor bow down the other in prayer, with any fervency and livelineſs; yet now it is otherwiſe: Then this is a good token the ſtrength of the diſeaſe is broken, Chriſt has taken you into his hoſpital, and has you under cure, by the daily application of his blood and Spirit, and you are on the way of recovery. Can you ſay further, that your drought is greatly abated, your thirſt after ſin and the world; and that your appetite for ſoul-food, communion with Chriſt in ordinances, is happily increaſed? Can you bear the light better

better than before? Do you love ſearching-ſermons? All theſe are good ſigns. Have you a high eſteem of your Phyſician, and do you entertain him kindly when he viſits you? Have you recovered more ſtrength and willingneſs to ſerve him in the way of commanded duties? And have you a holy fear and jealouſy of every thing that might bring on a relapſe into your old diſtempers? Then there is "good hope, through grace," that your faith is a healing faith, the work of healing is begun, and ſo far carried on. Chriſt is our Rock, and his work is perfect.

O then ſtudy to be thankful to your great Phyſician, ſaying, "What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, healeth all thy diſeaſes, and redeemeth thy ſoul from deſtruction; who reneweth thy youth like the eagles, maketh thee run and not weary, walk and not faint. Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for us." Then the cure ſhall be fully perfected, and we ſhall dwell always beſide our Phyſician, and enjoy perfect and uninterrupted health for ever and ever. Expreſs your thankfulneſs while you are here, by being witneſſes for Chriſt, ſhining as lights before others, commending Chriſt and his ways to them, hating all ſin, abſtaining from it; reproving ſin in others, and teſtifying againſt it. Be meek and lowly in your carriage; deal uprightly with all men; love all that bear Chriſt's image; be zealous for family-religion, for ſanctifying the ſabbath, and attending God's ordinances. Pray earneſtly for the coming of Chriſt's kingdom upon the earth; and do all you can to promote it.

Watch and pray againſt backſlidings and relapſes into old diſtempers, and for that end be humble and ſelf-diffident, be denied to your own ſtrength and conduct, and be always jealous of your corrupt and deceitful

Live by faith upon the Son of God," looking for righteouſneſs and ſtrength. And are invironed with enemies, " put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil." It is not the armour of your own reſolutions, it is the armour of God, even the graces of the Spirit; it is not ſome graces, or parts of that armour, it is the whole armour, all the Chriſtian graces. It is not enough to have the armour in the houſe, or grace in the habit; no, it muſt be put on, daily worn, and exerciſed. God hath provided different pieces of armour for you, the ſword of the Spirit, the ſhield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs; but there is nothing for the back, for God diſowns runaways, Heb. x. 38. " If any man draw back," &c.

ADVICE XIX.

From Exod. xii. 14. *And this day ſhall be unto you for a memorial.*

AS the paſſover feaſt was a memorial both of the deliverance from Egypt, and the redemption by Chriſt; ſo a communion ſabbath is a memorial of ſundry remarkable things, and ought to be held as a moſt memorable day by every believer; as it brings to our remembrance the greateſt events and bleſſings.

1. A communion-ſabbath is a lively memorial of Chriſt's death, for the ſacrament adminiſtered that day, by breaking of bread and pouring out of wine, is a viſible repreſentation of Chriſt's death, by the breaking of Chriſt's body, and pouring forth his blood on the croſs; an event which God will have remembered to the end of the world, and through all eternity. Why? becauſe by it God's perfections are highly glorified, and the elect world redeemed from hell. Chriſt did inſtitute the ordinance to be a ſtanding monument of his death while the world ſtands, 1 Cor. xi. 26. " As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come." And a monument of the wonderful love of God in giving his Son, and of the Son

in

in giving himſelf, to be a ſacrifice for our ſins, who were utterly unworthy of his love. By this memorial God would teach us the ineſtimable value of Chriſt's death, as the greateſt obligation that ever he put upon the world; and that we ought to declare our gratitude to God for the favour, in the moſt open and public manner; and rely upon Chriſt's death and ſacrifice, as the foundation of all our hopes of pardon and ſalvation. The death of Jeſus Chriſt is the moſt worthy ſubject of the diſcourſe and praiſe both of the redeemed on earth, and the glorified in heaven, according to Rev. i. 5.—v. 9. 12. Hence it was, that Moſes and Elias, when they came from heaven to mount Tabor, to wait upon their Lord when transfigured, they made choice of Chriſt's death for the ſubject of their converſation, Luke ix. 31. and good reaſon, for Chriſt's death was the ſpring and cauſe of all their glory in heaven; neither Moſes nor Elias had ſhined there, if it had not been for Chriſt's death.

2. A communion-ſabbath is a ſpecial memorial to us of Chriſt's reſurrection from the grave, which was on the firſt day of the week, and hence called the Lord's day, it being the moſt honourable day to our Lord Redeemer, and the moſt joyful day to all the redeemed; as it gave a clear proof of the perfection of Chriſt's ſacrifice he offered to divine juſtice, and that our Surety's ſatisfaction was accepted for our complete juſtification and abſolution. Hereby it appeared that the elect's debt was diſcharged, their redemption finiſhed, and their Cautioner liberated from priſon. This day Chriſt was "declared to be the Son of God with power." As his death did ſhew him to be truly man, ſo his reſurrection did manifeſt him to be truly God and the great Redeemer of the world. This was the day of Chriſt's victory and triumph, in which he ſolemnly appeared to be the Captain of our ſalvation, and obtained a glorious victory over all his and the church's enemies. This day he triumphed over the grave, death and hell, and over ſin, ſatan, and wicked men. Now death was unſtinged, the grave loſt its purchaſe, the ſerpent's head was bruiſed, the powers of hell vanquiſhed, and they were

were all ſwallowed up in victory. Likewiſe Chriſt, by his reſurrection, as the Head of the church, gave to all the members of his body a ſure pledge and earneſt of their reſurrection from the grave at the laſt day, to immortality and eternal life. And on this day he reſted from all his works of ſuffering and redemption, and rejoiced in the review of them with infinite delight and complacency. Now, a communion ſabbath is a bright memorial of this glorious day, which is to be had in everlaſting remembrance. O believer, remember it with thankfulneſs and joy.

3. This day is a memorial of your ſpiritual reſurrection and new birth, as it declares your reception into God's family, and ſeals your title to the privileges of his children, that you are born "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt," of the heavenly inheritance. And though the Lord's ſupper be not a converting ordinance in its own nature; yet the preaching of a crucified Chriſt this day, has been the means of converting many thouſands, and, in many others, of beginning the pangs and forerunners of the new birth, to wit, ſaving convictions of ſin, and enquiries after Chriſt, and ſalvation through him, which have ended in their converſion. O pray that it may be ſuch a day to you and many others.

4. This day is a memorial of your marriage-day; becauſe on it you enter into or renew your marriage-covenant with Chriſt the Bridegroom of the church. Miniſters, by the goſpel-offers, court your ſouls to Chriſt, ſaying, as thoſe did to Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 58. "Will you go with the Man Chriſt? On the communion-day, you ſolemnly give your anſwer, as ſhe did, "We will go;" and at the Lord's table you ſeal your engagement to him. Likewiſe this day is a memorial of the conſummation of your marriage with Chriſt at the great day, when he will come to receive home his eſpouſed bride, and conduct her to the King's palace with joy and triumph. O prepare and long for that day.

5. The communion-ſabbath is a memorial of your crucifying ſin which was the cauſe of your Redeemer's death.

death. At this ordinance you draw virtue from the death of Chriſt, to kill ſin and mortify ſtrong luſts. Many wreſtling believers have been enabled, at this occaſion, to give a death's wound to thoſe luſts and idols they had been long ſtruggling againſt before. Reſolve, then, in Chriſt's ſtrength, that ſin ſhall not out-live this day; it is moſt juſt to revenge the death of Chriſt upon it.

6. A communion-ſabbath is a memorial of Chriſt's conqueſt and coronation: For on this day Chriſt frequently receives the fruit and reward of the travail of his ſoul and his bitter agonies, by overcoming hearts, depoſing ſatan from his throne, and delivering ſouls from his thraldom, and tranſlating them into his own kingdom. And, at this occaſion, all worthy communicants do, as it were, put a crown of glory and honour upon Chriſt's head, by renouncing ſin, ſatan, and all that had exerciſed dominion over them before, and giving their full and hearty conſent that Chriſt alone ſhall reign over them for them. Chriſt is ſo delighted with this, that he eſteems it as his coronation-day, Cant. iii. 11. O come, then, and yield your hearts to Chriſt, and pray that the communion-day may be a day of his coronation and conqueſt, when ſinners ſhall give their free and willing conſent to the dethroning of ſatan, and enthroning of King Jeſus; come under Chriſt's ſceptre and government, and abandon all his enemies; for he hath beſt right to the throne, and the juſteſt title to reign over you.

7. A communion-ſabbath is a lively memorial and emblem of the everlaſting ſabbath above, and the heavenly feaſt there that ſhall never end, which Chriſt hath purchaſed and promiſed to his people. Why? becauſe on a communion-ſabbath here, there is an aſſembling of God's people to give thanks for redeeming love, and to feed upon Chriſt and his purchaſe, with ſatisfaction and ſongs of praiſe. In like manner, in the heavenly ſabbath, there will be a great gathering of all the ſaints through all the world, to admire and praiſe God for redeeming goodneſs, and to ſit down and feaſt with Chriſt for ever, upon the benefits of his purchaſe. O how great

great is the plenty, variety, the fulneſs of proviſion and ſatisfaction, which is at the upper-table! there they feed upon eternal redemption from hell and wrath, perfect freedom from ſin and ſatan, and from all afflictions and complaints. They feed upon the glorious preſence of God in human nature, the conſtant ſhinings of his face, and intimations of his love; the bright diſcoveries of the works of God in creation and providence, and eſpecially in the redemption of men by Chriſt. And, in this feſtival, they have perfect ſatisfaction, joined with eternal ſongs of praiſe. But, O how far will the communion-ſabbath above excel thoſe we have here below! Here we are oft put to mix our praiſes with mourning and tears, becauſe of ſin prevailing, or the Spirit withdrawing. Here Judaſes, and unworthy gueſts, thruſt in among the diſciples; but at the higher-table there is no ſuch mixture, all is pure and holy, and there is nought to allay their joy. Here our communion-ſabbaths are ſoon over, and have nights, week-days, and trials to ſucceed them; but the communion-ſabbath above, the feaſt, muſic and aſſembly, are everlaſting, without interruption or uneaſineſs of any ſort. O then improve theſe ſhort ſabbaths, as memorials and means to prepare you for this everlaſting ſabbath; and, in all ordinances here, keep your eye upon the heavenly feſtival.

ADVICE XX.

From Jer. iii. 19. *How ſhall I put thee among the children? Thou ſhalt call me, My Father.*

THOUGH there be great mountains of difficulties in the way of ſinners ſalvation, yet God, in his free mercy, hath found out an expedient to get over them; even by making choice of God as our God and Father in Chriſt. That you may admire his grace the more, take a view of the difficulties that ly in the way. God might

might ſay, " How ſhall I put thee among the children" of my family, who are the offspring of apoſtate and rebellious parents, who ungratefully departed from God without any provocation, ſold themſelves to the devil to do his drudgery, and rebelled againſt a moſt gracious God, and loving Father? And how ſhall I put you, that have ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam, among my children? How ſhall I be reconciled to ſuch treacherous dealers? Again, he might ſay, " How ſhall I put you among my children," who are condemned rebels in the hands of my infinite juſtice, and whom I am engaged by my truth to deſtroy, having ſaid, " The ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die?" Here is a burning mountain of juſtice in the way of your ſalvation; how ſhall mercy get over it to help you? " How ſhall I put you among my children," whoſe hearts are full of enmity againſt againſt me, and have all your days been plotting with the devil, and aſſiſting him to fight againſt me, and pull the crown off my head? " How ſhall I put you among my children," who are ſo deformed, polluted and loathſome creatures, as black as hell can make you, who have all your days been wallowing in the mire, and drenched in the puddle of ſin? " How ſhall I put you among my children," who have been all your days Satan's vaſſals, drudging at his work, grinding in his priſon, and ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures? " How ſhall I put you among my children," who are impotent and lame, cannot run my errands, nor move one ſtep in my ſervice, nor do any thing to pleaſe or glorify me? " How ſhall I put you among my children," who hate my children, and my image in them, and have preferred the devil's children to mine? " How ſhall I put you among my children," that hate my childrens bread, and chuſe rather to feed on huſks with the ſwine? " How ſhall I put you among my children," that never liked my childrens work, never loved prayer, praiſe, nor any ſpiritual employment? " How ſhall I put you among my children," who are ſinners in Zion, have ſitten many years under goſpel-offers and calls to come to Chriſt, and have ſlighted them all, and bolted the door againſt my

dear Son, and quenched the motions of my Spirit? "How ſhall I put you among my children," who have been ſo impenitent and hard hearted all your days, as never to drop one tear for any of all the black and heinous ſins you have committed againſt me? "How ſhall I put you among my children," who have never kept one word to me, but have broke all your baptiſmal engagements, and gone over to the devil's camp, and harboured my enemies? O how is it that God can come over theſe mountains, to put ſuch as you among the children, and allow you to ſit down at the childrens table and eat of their bread? How is this conſiſtent with the honour and holineſs of God?

Bleſſed be God who hath found out a way for his mercy to come over all theſe mountains, by providing a Mediator and Surety to ſatisfy juſtice for our ſins, and proclaiming a new covenant, that whoſoever accepts of the Mediator, and makes choice of God as his God and Father in him, ſhall be taken into God's family, and be numbered among his children, notwithſtanding of all that you have done to provoke him to caſt you off. "Thou ſhalt call me my Father." Wonderful condeſcenſion, that he ſhould allow ſuch prodigals and runaways at all to ſpeak to him, and far more that he ſhould put words in their months, and ſuch kindly words, as my Father! Amazing goodneſs!

If you would make this addreſs aright, and take hold of his covenant, ſo as you may be taken in among the children of God, and allowed to come to his table and eat of their bread; you muſt be truly grieved for your long rebelling againſt your heavenly Father, and ſlighting his offers of mercy and pardon through Chriſt; you muſt be deeply humbled before him, and fall in with the goſpel-method of acceſs to him by a Mediator; you muſt quit all dependence on your own righteouſneſs, and break with all your Father's enemies; you muſt make a free and hearty choice of God, as your God and Father in Chriſt, reſting wholly upon Chriſt's mediation and righteouſneſs for acceptance with God; you muſt make a ſurrender of yourſelves, and all you have, to him, and engage in Chriſt's

ſtrength

ſtrength to ſerve him, as obedient children, deſirous to pleaſe your Father in all things.

O come, then, enter into covenant with God, and make choice of him as your Father in Chriſt; this is the only expedient for removing the difficulties in the way of your ſalvation, and for taking you into God's family, and numbering you among his children; unleſs you fall in with it, you can have no right to the childrens bread, you will be unworthy communicants, and eat and drink judgment to yourſelves. O then, prevent it, by entering into covenant with God, that you may be taken in among the children. O young perſons, let me put the matter home to you, as Joſhua did to the Iſraelites, "Chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve?" Chuſe you whom you will take for your Father, whether God or the devil! Both are courting your hearts; which of them will you yield to? Is there any ſo fooliſh as to halt betwixt two opinions in this caſe? Is there any ſo mad as to ſtand in doubt whether to dwell with Chriſt or the devil for ever? Now, Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, are ſtruggling for your hearts; a cunning devil is holding, and a dying Saviour is drawing; now caſt the balance, and ſhew which of them you incline to: The eyes of the glorious Trinity are on you, the eyes of angels and men are on you, to ſee what the iſſue will be. O then, be wiſe, and come preſently, and make a ſurrender of your hearts to God in Chriſt. There is no muſic ſo melodious in God's ears, as the voice of young perſons weeping and covenanting with God. The ſeaſon of youth is the male in your flock, it belongs to God, let him have it; they are curſed who deny it to him, and reſerve the blind and lame to God, ſuch as the dregs of old age, or ſickneſs, Mal. i. 7

O communicants, ſee always to bring Chriſt alongſt with you in your covenanting with God; never think of covenanting with him but by ſacrifice; bring the ſacrifice of Chriſt's death to atone for the breach of the firſt covenant, and bring his Suretyſhip to anſwer for your faithfulneſs in the ſecond, otherwiſe you can never call God your Father, nor be taken in among

his children. Remember you are all engaged in this covenant by your parents undertaking for you in baptiſm; but aſſoon as you are capable, God will have you to renew it perſonally and explicitly, and to come ſenſible of your breaking this covenant, in running away from Chriſt's colours, and in going over to the devil's camp; and deeply ſenſible of your folly in delaying and ſtanding out ſo long againſt Chriſt's gracious calls and free offers. O come, as penitent prodigals, and mourning backſliders, with your faces Zion-ward, weeping as ye go, willing to enter into God's covenant, and give yourſelves away unto the Lord, who is your rightful owner. Since Chriſt comes to you at this occaſion, as in *ſtreams of blood*, it is ſurely proper that you meet him with *ſtreams of tears* for ſin, that cauſed his blood to be poured forth as water; and that you come preſently to an open rupture with all his enemies, and particularly with your unbelief, your pride, your paſſion, your hypocriſy, and other ſins that have pierced him. Break with them all, and come to him with the apropriating acts of faith, ſaying, "My Father, my Lord, and my God."

ADVICE XXI.

From Luke v. 26. *They glorified God, ſaying, We have ſeen ſtrange things to-day.*

THOSE who have been attending ordinances, ought to recollect what they have been ſeeing, doing, and hearing, and to be ſuitably affected therewith. Self-examination is needful after communicating, as well as before it. Had you the eyes of faith open to ſee and obſerve the goings of our God and King in his ſanctuary; you may then ſay on the evening of a communion-ſabbath, "We have ſeen ſtrange and marvellous things to day." You have ſeen the bloody tragedy of Chriſt's ſufferings repreſented and re-acted; Chriſt with

with garments dipt in blood fighting a bloody battle for us; in which the glory of the divine attributes are wonderfully diſplayed: Behold the free love and mercy of God, who was highly offended with us, yet contriving our redemption, and giving the Son of his love to die for us, who were his enemies; and for this end creating a new thing in the earth, the incarnation of an infinite Perſon, making a woman, a virgin, to be mother of him that created her! God incarnate is a world's wonder, Jer. xxxi. 22. A ſtrange thing! The Son of God conſents thus to humble himſelf and die for condemned criminals; rather than he would ſee elect ſinners plunged into the bottomleſs gulf of eternal miſery, in his love and pity he would put himſelf into it to keep them out! Here infinite *wiſdom* diſplayed in finding out a way to ſatisfy juſtice in puniſhing ſin ſeverely, and at the time to gratify mercy in pardoning the ſinner freely! A ſtrange device! *Juſtice* and *mercy* are reconciled, and kiſs one another in man's redemption by Chriſt's death, the demands of both are anſwered, and the glory of both equally diſcovered. Here is ſeen the ſeverity of juſtice and fierceneſs of God's wrath againſt ſin, in not ſparing his innocent Son when he became our Surety, nor abating him one farthing of the debt! Nay, he awaked the ſword of juſtice againſt him, and poured out the vials of his wrath upon him, which kindled a fire in his ſoul, made him ſweat and fall to the ground; and there he that made the heavens lay grovelling in the anguiſh of his Spirit, and ſweating clods of blood! O how heavy was the burden of guilt that preſſed his ſoul at this time!

You have ſeen a ſtrange thing, *blood ſtreaming* forth of marvellous virtue, that can ſoften hearts, though harder than a ſtone; that can heal all the wounds given you by the old ſerpent; that can waſh away the deepeſt ſtains of guilt, and make creatures black as hell, whiter than ſnow! And though many thouſands have been cleanſed by it, yet the ſtream is nowiſe defiled; but ſtill is pure and clear as cryſtal! You have ſeen the amazing humiliation of the Son of God for vile worms! a ſtrange thing! He was made a worm,

a clod of duſt; yea, made ſin for us! ſtrange! that he who thunders in the heavens, ſhould be brought to lie in the manger, and cry in the cradle! That he who framed the heavens, ſhould work with a carpenter in his trade! That the great Judge of all the world, ſhould be brought to the bar, accuſed as a malefactor, condemned and crucified betwixt two thieves, that ſuch criminals as you might have a room among the bleſſed! You have ſeen the Lord of Life deprived of life, to purchaſe life for you! ſpotleſs Holineſs made ſin, and eternal Bleſſedneſs made a curſe, to redeem you from ſin, and the curſe due to it! A ſtrange thing! for the holy One of God to make ſuch an exchange with you, to take the curſe, to give you the bleſſing! to take ſhame, to give you glory! to take death, to give you life! to take your ſins, to give you his righteouſneſs? A ſtrange thing, to ſee the righteouſneſs of one Man, a robe large enough and ſufficient to cover many thouſands, ſo as not one ſpot of guilt can be ſeen in them by the eye of infinite juſtice! A ſtrange thing! to ſee Chriſt willing to have his ſide opened, to ſatisfy doubting ſouls of the reality of his love, that you might look into his heart, and ſee it panting with love to you, and hear him ſaying, as to Thomas, "Be no more faithleſs, but believing!" Strange! to ſee him bowing his head on the croſs, to whiſper comfort into your ear, ſaying, Now "it is finiſhed;" I have drunk the brook in the way, even the whole river of God's wrath, ſo that there is not one drop left for you; every believer's debt is paid! A ſtrange thing! to behold the Father pleaſed to ſee the bruiſes, agonies, and ſufferings of dear Son, that his enemies might be eternally freed from them!

A ſtrange thing! to ſee death conquering death; the death of Chriſt conquering all his and our enemies! If any had ſeen Chriſt entering the liſts with death and hell, law and juſtice, he might have ſtood amazed, and ſaid, O what will come of this Champion, that is engaged with ſuch ſtrong enemies? But ſtay a little, and you ſhall ſee him lead captivity captive, triumphing over them all, and fetch all he came for, out of the hand of the devil! When Chriſt was brought to the croſs,

croſs, one might have thought that devils, wicked men, and death, were triumphing over him; but his word ſaith, that on "the croſs he ſpoiled principalities and powers; and made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." A ſtrange myſtery! while enemies were ſcoffing and inſulting him, Chriſt is triumphing over them! A glorious conqueſt Chriſt's was; for he not only ſubdued his enemies, but conquered them, ſo far as to make them uſeful and ſerviceable to him and his people! Let us admire the conqueſt and the Conqueror, though he was deſpiſed by men; yet, like David, he gloriouſly ſubdued Goliath, that defied the armies of the God of Iſrael: He cruſhed the head of the old ſerpent that had bruiſed his heel, and enſlaved his elect; and he put all his other enemies to flight!

A ſtrange ſight! you have ſeen to-day, God coming over the greateſt mountains of difficulties, to pardon and ſave ſinners! taking rebels to be his children and favourites; and exalting them above angels that never ſinned? You have ſeen the King of glory courting poor ſlaves, black Ethiopians, and inviting them with out-ſtretched arms to come and match with him, and ſealing the marriage-covenant with his blood! You have ſeen him make a rich feaſt to them, and welcome them to feed on a crucified Chriſt, and all his purchaſe! Behold the heavenly Pelican, that feeds his young ones with his blood! How amazing is the ſight, that God ſhould not only feaſt, but ſeal a marriage-covenant with you, whoſe deſcent is baſe, whoſe perſon is ugly, whoſe portion is nothing but diſeaſes and miſery? O what ſtrange ſights have you ſeen to day! you have ſeen the love of Chriſt, the worth of ſouls, the price of pardon, an emblem of the higher table, to which many of your friends and acquaintances are gone, where the feaſt will never end!

You have ſeen, to day, a ſtrange act of mercy to guilty and ill-deſerving creatures, who have ate and drunk before the Lord, and yet on them he hath not laid his hand; he hath made no breach upon any, as on Uzzah, Nadab, Abihu, or the men of Bethſhemeſh! He hath not ſtruck any dead with the bread in their mouths,

mouths, or cup in their hands; nor ſent any from the table to hell, though you muſt acknowledge you deſerved rather to have had a cup of wrath put into your hand, than a cup of bleſſing! A ſtrange ſight! that goſpel offers are yet continued to thoſe who have abuſed many ſacraments and ſermons! that Chriſt ſhould be ſtretching out the ſceptre of grace, and offering pardon and mercy to thoſe who have crucified him afreſh, and trampled his blood under foot.

Have you ſeen evidences of gracious changes wrought on hearts and wills by the word, ſecure ſouls awakened, blind eyes opened, proud creatures humbled, careleſs ſinners made to cry, Away with the world, and give me Chriſt: None but Chriſt; I count all things but loſs and dung in compariſon of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. Theſe are ſtrange ſights, with which you ſhould be much affected, ſo as to hate ſin, love Chriſt, bleſs God, and glorify him with your hearts, tongues, and lives. It is the end of all God's works that we ſhould glorify him. Oh! the beſt have reaſon to lament that they are ſo little affected with the marvellous things ſet before them in the word and ſacrament! Surely, when you compare the rock whence you are hewn, and that on which God ſets you! and when you conſider the low ſtoop Chriſt has made to purchaſe ſuch clods of earth and ſins with his blood, you have cauſe to be amazed at his love, and confounded at your own ingratitude, in being ſo little affected with his marvellous loving kindneſs, or melted for ſin that was the cauſe of all his ſufferings! O let the ſtrange and wonderful tokens of Chriſt's love you have been ſeeing and ſharing of in the ſacrament, engage you to more thankfulneſs in heart and life. Have you been waſhing your robes white in the blood of the Lamb? be careful to keep them clean, and do not defile them again in the mire of ſin; remember your vows, and keep your face ſtill towards your Father's houſe, which is a pure and undefiled dwelling; you cannot take filthy hands or feet thither, for no unclean thing enters there, Pſal. xciii. 5. "Holineſs becometh thine houſe, O Lord, for ever."

ADVICE

ADVICE XXII.

From Luke vi. 21. *Bleſſed are ye that hunger now, for ye ſhall be filled.*

IN ſcripture, hunger and thirſt, when applied to ſpiritual things, imports the ſame thing; to wit, a ſtrong deſire after ſpiritual and heavenly good things; which deſire implies ſpiritual life, a feeling ſenſe of want, and a longing for food to the ſoul, together with the uſe of all proper means to obtain it. Now, the main object of this hunger or thirſt is Jeſus Chriſt, or God in Chriſt, Pſal. xlii. 1, 2.—lxiii. 1. Now, there are many things in Chriſt which the hungry ſoul doth deſire; as, 1. Chriſt's blood, as the ſoul's ranſom and cleanſing fountain. 2. Chriſt's Spirit, as the ſoul's quickener, comforter and guide. 3. Chriſt's righteouſneſs, as the ſoul's clothing and protection. 4. Chriſt's word, as the ſoul's daily food and cordials. 5. Chriſt's ſupper, as the ſoul's feaſt and pledge of heaven. 6. Chriſt's graces, as the ſoul's riches and ornaments. 7. Chriſt's way, or holineſs in heart and life, as the ſoul's path to heaven. 8. Chriſt's day, as the ſoul's weekly market-day for getting in proviſions neceſſary for working, journeying, fighting, &c. 9. Chriſt's manſions above, as the ſoul's dwelling-place for eternal communion with God and his ſaints. Now, if ye would be truly bleſſed, ye muſt hunger and thirſt for theſe things, firmly believing that in theſe your true happineſs doth lie, and not in the world or ſenſual things.

Again, ſee that your hunger be of the right kind, that it be inſatiable, ſo that nothing can put it off or ſatisfy it but Chriſt; the truly hungry ſoul will not be pleaſed with the beſt duties, ordinances, miniſters, ſermons, ſacraments, or any other thing without Chriſt. The hungry ſoul will adventure on the greateſt difficulties for Chriſt, he will part with any thing for him: All the treaſures, honours, muſic, or comforts of life, can-

not ſatisfy him, none but Chriſt the ſoul's food. True hunger will put him upon the uſe of all means, and make him content to take Chriſt upon any terms, and put a blank in his hand, and ſay, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do! I'll ſubſcribe to any thing, only give me Chriſt, give me food to my ſtarving ſoul.

Such hungry ſouls are bleſſed, becauſe he hath promiſed to ſatisfy and fill them. It is God that creates the appetite, and excites the hunger, and therefore he will ſatisfy it. The hungry are the moſt earneſt and importunate beggars at the throne of grace; and ſuch he has promiſed to hear, Luke ii. 9. The hungry will wait at God's door for an alms, and he promiſes that thoſe who "wait for him ſhall not be aſhamed," Iſa. xlix. 23. The proud, the rich, the full and ſelf-righteous will go away, if the door be not preſently opened; but the hungry will aſk, ſeek, knock, and knock again, and wait till God think fit to open, and grant an alms. Theſe God is bound by his word to ſatisfy. He is their Father, and hath the bowels of a Father to pity his children. He hears the ravens and young lions when they cry, and feeds them, and will he not hear his own children, and fill their hungry ſouls? Yes, he hath promiſed it.

Queſt. But what is that fill he promiſes to the hungry? *Anſ.* He fills them with divine diſcoveries, as with the knowledge of God's greatneſs and majeſty, ſo as to make them ſenſible of their own nothingneſs, and with the knowledge of God's goodneſs and free love to ſinners in Chriſt, ſo as to make them fall into raptures of admiration, and cry who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity? Micah. vii. 18. He fills them with a diſcovery of the excellency of the goſpel-rememedy for periſhing ſouls, ſo as to make them ſay, it is a device every way worthy of God; Chriſt's mediatory offices, his covenant, his righteouſneſs, his blood, his purchaſe and fulneſs, do nobly anſwer all our ſouls wants and neceſſities; they deliver us from ſin and miſery, and they bring us grace and glory. He fills his hungry people with goſpel promiſes, by letting them ſee their name in them, and giving them faith to take hold

hold of them and apply them. Many a ſweet fill do they get from ſuch promiſes as theſe, Jer. xxxii. 40. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 28. Jer. iii. 22. 1 John ii. 1. Rom. xvi. 20. Heb. xiii. 5. He fills them with the intimations of the pardon of their ſins, and with peace and joy in believing, Rom. xv. 13. ſo as to baniſh their doubts and fears. What a ſweet fill doth Chriſt's voice give them, ſuch as that in Matth. ix. 2. Luke xxiv. 36, 38 John xiv. 27. Rom. viii. 1. He fills them with reſolution and ſtrength to conquer ſin, perform duties, reſiſt temptations, and bear afflictions; when he ſpeaks to them as to Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 9. or as in Iſa. xli. 10. and xlii. 2. He fills them by giving them ſweet returns of prayer, aſſurance of his love, and of his gracious preſence with them. He fills them by making over Chriſt's fulneſs and purchaſe to them, and by giving them Piſgah-views of the promiſed land, and will at laſt fill them with glory.

It is only the hungry that ſhall be filled, the needy, the humble and ſelf-denied, for "the rich are ſent empty away," Luke i. 53. the *rich*, that is, thoſe who are filled with a conceit of their own ſtrength and ſufficiency, their gifts and performances, and go about to eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of their own, and ſee not their need of Chriſt; thoſe ſhall go empty away, for they do not prize Chriſt, nor are willing to come up to his terms. They go away empty of Chriſt and his riches; but alas, they go away, filled with pride and ſelf-conceit, filled with love to ſin, love to the world, and love to their own righteouſneſs. Oh, this is a miſerable fill.

O hungry ſouls, bleſs God that gives you this appetite, when others are rich and full in their own conceit, labour to preſerve this appetite and wait about God's houſe and table, where ſoul food is to be had; and bleſs him even for the ſmalleſt crumbs, as when he gives you a greater hatred of ſin, a higher eſteem of Chriſt, a greater deſire after heart-holineſs, a reſtleſsneſs without Chriſt, a willingneſs to part with all for Chriſt, or ſtronger reſolutions to cleave to Chriſt and and duty. Theſe crumbs are worthy of thanks, though ye be not filled with joy and peace in believing. Wait

on the Lord, and wait on him in every ordinance and duty of his appointment, believing him to be faithful who hath ſaid, "They ſhall not be aſhamed who wait for me."

Object. Some may ſay, We have waited long, and have not got a crumb. *Anſ.* Some eminent ſaints have been put to cry, "How long wilt thou forget me, Lord, ſhall it be for ever?" Pſal. xiii. But they muſt wait in the uſe of means until God's time come, and adore the ſovereignty of God in his dealings with them. His people have reſigned themſelves to the care and wiſdom of God, who knows what is beſt for them; believing there is a time coming when God will make up all their loſſes. O believers, there is a fill remaining for you above, that will ſoon make you forget all your days of ſcarcity here below.

ADVICE XXIII.

From Pſal. cvii. 2. *Let the redeemed of the Lord ſay ſo—*

WHAT is it ſuch perſons ſhould ſay? Let them both ſay and ſing of God's goodneſs and mercy to them; for, (of all men) the redeemed of the Lord have moſt reaſon to be thankful for Chriſt's diſtinguiſhing mercy in freeing them from the law's curſes and ſatan's power, from the guilt, dominion, and puniſhment of ſin; from the ſting of death, and the wrath to come. Believers are redeemed both from ſin and hell.

Queſt. How may I know if I be among theſe happy ones, "the redeemed of the Lord?" *Anſ.* Take theſe marks: Did you ever ſee your ſlavery and bondage by nature, ſo that no leſs than an infinite price and power could ranſom and liberate you? Was you ſo convinced and humbled with the ſight of your miſery, as to be content of freedom from it on any terms? Have you ventured your ſoul on Chriſt's merit and mercy, conform to goſpel-offers, being well pleaſed with the frame of the new-covenant, and the ſelf-denying way of

of ſaving ſouls by Chriſt's imputed righteouſneſs? Are you content with Chriſt to be your King and Ruler, as well as your Prieſt and Saviour? Have you given up yourſelf to the Lord to live for him, deſirous that his love may always conſtrain you to do his will? O then, you may conclude you are among the "redeemed of the Lord," and that his bleſſed body was broke, and his blood ſhed to ranſom you.

Peculiar reaſons have you to extol his goodneſs and mercy above others. Why? He hath opened your *eyes* to ſee the beauty of your Redeemer, and the ways of holineſs, when others remain in blindneſs! He hath opened your *ears* to hear the joyful ſound, and fall in with it, when others are deaf to it! He hath looſed your tongues to pray and praiſe, when others are dumb, and tongue-tied! He hath opened your hearts to entertain Chriſt crucified, when others ſhut him out! He hath brought you to a *feeling* of the evil and burden of ſin, when others are without feeling! He hath given you *appetites* for ſpiritual food, when others reliſh nothing but things earthly! He hath given you the *promiſe* and *hope* of complete redemption from ſin and miſery above, when others live without Chriſt, and without hope! Let the "redeemed of the Lord" then ſing and praiſe him above all others.

O believing communicants, "redeemed of the Lord," give him thanks, and expreſs your thankfulneſs by your thoughts and actions, as well as your words; namely, by your high eſteem of your Redeemer, and of his blood and righteouſneſs that purchaſed all for you. By avoiding every thing that diſhonours him, and flying from the ſins that are common and faſhionable where you live. By commending your Redeemer to thoſe who know him not. By ſtanding up as witneſſes for him, and for his truths and ways, in the midſt of a Chriſt deſpiſing generation. By ſtrictly obſerving the Lord's day, as being a weekly memorial of redeeming love. By longing for the enlarging of Chriſt's kingdom, and rejoicing at the news of it: And by putting honour on all the friends and lovers of the Redeemer.

Laſtly, Shew your thankfulneſs, by ſinging pſalms, hymns,

hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, in praiſe of redeeming love, and of the Redeemer's perſon, offices and ſufferings; a ſubject that can never be exhauſted. Sing praiſes to the great God, that humbled himſelf to leave his high throne, that came down to dwell in fleſh, and die for us; and to riſe again, and aſcend to heaven, to take poſſeſſion of the inheritance, and make accommodations for us there. On this account, the Spirit calls us four times to ſing praiſes in one breath, Pſal. xlvii. 6. "God is gone up with a ſhout; ſing praiſes to God, ſing praiſes; ſing praiſes unto our King, ſing praiſes." This ſinging is moſt acceptable to God, and profitable to ourſelves. As God makes it the eternal work of heaven, ſo he would have us frequently employed in it on earth. But, Oh! how do we fail here! Reformed churches abroad do far exceed us in the frequency of this duty, as they do in the variety and ſweetneſs of their tunes.

What is *ſinging*, but a kind of reading with meditation and deliberation, in order to give the more free vent to the thoughts and affections to breathe and aſcend heavenwards. The wiſe God inſtitutes *ſinging* in his praiſe, becauſe the melody of the voice helps to affect the heart, and raiſe the thoughts; "for he knoweth our frame." And indeed, it is only when the heart correſponds with the voice, that muſic is pleaſant to God: To this purpoſe one ſaith well:

Sweet melody the hymn affords,
When with the lines the heart accords.

O let the *redeemed* ſing praiſe, and give thanks to God for his unſpeakable Gift, both now, and for evermore. Amen.

I ſhall add no more *Sacramental Advices* in the preceding method, but ſhall ſhut up all with a cluſter of ſhort *Scripture Directions*, proper not only for communicants, but for all Chriſtians travelling heavenward.

A

A SHORT

CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY:

CONSISTING OF

FORTY SCRIPTURE-DIRECTIONS,

PROPER FOR ALL

CHRISTIANS INTENDING HEAVEN.

IT ought to be the great concern of all baptiſed perſons to renew their baptiſmal covenant betimes, and, by a private tranſaction with God, to take the baptiſmal engagements upon themſelves, and thereby become Chriſtians by their own perſonal conſent and ſurrender, as well as by their parents dedication; and afterwards go and ſeal this tranſaction publicly, by partaking of the Lord's ſupper. Concerning this, I have given directions in *The Young Communicants Catechiſm*. Only, I would intreat all my readers, for Chriſt's ſake, and their own ſouls ſake, to beware of going about this work in a ſuperficial or formal manner, and of reſting upon lip-labour, and the external part of the duty. O never be eaſy until you inwardly and heartily cloſe with Chriſt, according to the gracious goſpel-offer which God makes unto you. Take no reſt till you get your ſouls united to Chriſt by a true faith, and ſavingly renewed and changed from nature to grace, by the effcacious working of the holy ſpirit in regeneration. And as you are to cloſe with Chriſt by faith in your firſt converſion; ſo you muſt ſtudy to live all your days

a life of faith on the Son of God, always making uſe of him, and leaning on him for righteouſneſs and ſtrength. I ſhall ſay no more by way of preface, but proceed to branch forth the Chriſtian's work and exerciſe in this lower world, in the following Scripture-and directions.

DIRECTION I. *Let never the world come in God's room.* Beware of the love of the world; often think upon that awakening word, 1 John ii. 15. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Oh, this is the ruining ſin of multitudes, their love to, and complacency in, the things of the world. Nay, the moſt part of men are damned for loving the world too much, and loving God too little.—Remember, the faſter grips ye take of the world, the looſer are your grips of Chriſt; and the more ye get of the world, ye have the greater account to make to him that gives it, and has made you ſteward of it; therefore uſe your money and goods for his ſervice and honour: You muſt anſwer for your riches, but your riches cannot anſwer for you.—Alſo, remember if ye ſet your hearts on the world, it will be all that you will get; to have a competent portion of things earthly is a mercy, but to have earthly things for our only portion is a dreadful miſery. Wherefore, while your hand is in this world, let your heart be in heaven. Let the buſineſs of your ſoul be the buſineſs of your life.

DIRECT. I. *Keep up the ſame opinion now of the things of the world, that you will have when you come to die.* You ſee what a low price men ſet upon the riches, pomp, and glory of the world when they are dying: Had you the ſame thoughts of theſe things now, I am ſure you would not venture the loſs of your ſouls, the loſs of God's favour, the loſs of a good conſcience, and the loſs of eternal glory, for a whole world; far leſs for a ſmall trifle of it, as many now do. Think much upon that text, Matth. xvi. 26.

DIREC.

DIRECT. III. *Be not ſtrangers to yourſelves, but often commune with your own hearts;* as directed Pſal. iv. 4. When others are cenſuring and backbiting their neighbours, be you ſearching and cenſuring yourſelves. Self-examination is a moſt neceſſary duty. Examine yourſelves after every ordinance, what good you have got by it, what entertainment you gave your Saviour: Aſk how were your hearts affected by ſuch a word, &c. Commune with your hearts about your title to heaven: Judge of your eternal ſtate by your ſpiritual ſtate, and judge of your ſpiritual ſtate by the delightful and cuſtomary actions of your lives. Judge of it by your hatred of ſin, and love to Chriſt, and by the conſcience you make of ſecret prayer, and reading God's word. In communing with your hearts, among other things, aſk yourſelves, What are likelieſt to be your death-bed thoughts and wiſhes? Will they not be ſuch as theſe? O that I had loved Chriſt more, and the world leſs! O that I had improven goſpel-opportunities better! O that I had accepted Chriſt's calls and offers more readily! O that I had ſpent more time in prayer and ſearching the ſcriptures! O that I had been more ſpiritual and fervent in every duty!—Aſk yourſelves, what are theſe ſins or practices which will be moſt frightful to look back on, when ye ſee yourſelves juſt within a ſtep of God's tribunal? Study always to keep up death-bed thoughts of things.—Commune with your hearts about theſe things *upon your bed*, and alſo *before you go to bed*. Let conſcience bring in the accounts of every day before you ly down: mourn over the ſins of every day, and apply the blood of Chriſt for waſhing them away. Thus keep ſhort reckonings with God and conſcience, that you may not have old ſcores to clear when you come to a death-bed. Likewiſe, at theſe communings, let every man aſk himſelf, What is my preſent ſtate and condition? Would I be willing to ly down and die in the frame and diſpoſition I am in juſt now? And I know not but I may be as near death this moment, as if my friends were looking on me ſtruggling with the pangs of death on my bed.

DIRECT IV. *Begin early in the ſervice of God, and give him the days of youth*, Eccleſ. xii. 1. Thoſe who are young cannot begin their ſervice to God too ſoon; God deſires it, to ſhew God's delight in early piety. We ſee the Scripture commends young ones for it; it is recorded with honour, that the child Samuel miniſtered to the Lord, 1 Sam. ii. 18. Joſiah is commended for his tender heart for God in his tender years, 2 Kings xxii. 19. Chriſt was well pleaſed with the hoſannahs of the children that attended him, Matth. xxi. 15, 16. When Solomon in his youth ſought God for wiſdom, it is ſaid, "The ſpeech pleaſed the Lord," 1 Kings iii. 10. So Timothy is commended for his early piety, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And God ſays to Iſrael, "I remember the kindneſs of thy youth," Jer. ii. 2. And he recommends to every one to begin ſoon, Eccleſ. xii. 1. The young diſciple was moſt beloved, and leaned on Chriſt's boſom. —Now is the proper time, O young people, for making your acquaintance with God, and for laying a good foundation for the time to come. Repentance is eaſieſt in younger years; ſin is then leſs rooted, ſatan's grips leſs faſtened, goſpel-offers not ſo ſlighted, the Spirit is not ſo much quenched, the conſcience not ſo hardened; the heart is then more eaſily melted and broke. God ſeeks the *male of the flock*, the beſt of your time, O then let him have it. If you forget God when young, it is juſt with God to forget and neglect you when old.

DIRECT. V. *Shun the company that ſhuns God, and keep the company that God keeps*, Pſal. cxix. 63. 115. Prov. xiii. 20. Look on the ſociety of the carnal or profane as infectious; but reckon ſerious praying perſons the excellent ones of the earth: Such will ſerve to quicken you when dead, and warm you when cold. Make the livelieſt of God's people your greateſt intimates; and ſee that their love and likeneſs to Chriſt be the great motive of your love to them, more than their love or likeneſs to you. It is not true Chriſtian love, but party love, to love only thoſe who are of your ſentiments in all things. Yea, though they ſhould differ from you in ſome things, if you ſee God's image on them, and that they have fellowſhip with the Head, you

ought

ought to love them, and have fellowſhip with them: Keep up the communion of ſaints, for it is one of the articles of our creed. Chriſtian conference and ſocial prayer have been bleſſed of God to preſerve the life of religion in many places, therefore let thoſe who fear the Lord ſpeak often to one another, Mal. iii. 16.

DIRECT. VI. *Put a high value upon precious time, and loſe none of it by ſloth,* Eph. v. 16. Eſteem time as thoſe do who are at the point of death; and always remember that it is impoſſible to call time again. Look upon the loſs of time as a greater loſs than the loſs of your money, or any worldly thing; and therefore ſhun time-waſting games, unprofitable diverſions, and idle talking.—Eſpecially value the moſt precious part of your time, ſuch as the morning of youth, the morning of every day, and particularly the precious time of the Lord's day. Look on the Lord's day as a tryſt-day with heaven; loſe not any part of it, but carefully improve it for God and the good of ſouls, both your own and others. It is want of thought, not want of work, that makes any ſay, they have time to ſpare.

DIRECT. VII. *Allow a little time every day to think upon eternity.* Conſider the import of theſe words, *everlaſting puniſhment, and life eternal,* Matth. xxv. 46. O eternity, eternity, that is never nearer an end, but always, as it were, but beginning! One ſerious thought of eternity is enough to ſtrike a careleſs ſoul to the heart. Why? he ſtands every hour at the door of eternity, and if he ſtep in while out of Chriſt, he is eternally undone; eternally in deſpair.—O! the ſwift river time is carrying every one of us into an ocean of eternity, an ocean that hath neither bank nor bottom, and what each of us muſt ſoon launch forth into. What an awful thought is this! every one of us is within a ſtep of being eternally bleſſed, or eternally curſed! eternally ſaved, or eternally damned! O if every one would believe and conſider this, and be wiſe, ſo as to pray as for eternity, repent as for eternity, hear as for eternity, live as for eternity, obey and do every thing as for eternity.

DIRECT. VIII. *Throughout your whole life be mindful of the chief buſineſs of life,* Phil. ii. 12. Now the buſineſs of life is to make it ſure that Chriſt is your life; it is to think much on the end of your life, and provide for it; it is to lay hold on eternal life, and keep ſtill ſight of it: So that "when Chriſt who is your life ſhall appear, ye may alſo appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 4. Let not religion be your diverſion, but your buſineſs; mind it as the one thing needful; give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure. Make ſure your calling, and thus you make ſure your election. If you would make ſure your calling, make it ſure that you are united to Chriſt by faith, and that Chriſt is the life of your ſouls. Do not reſt in convictions, nor in tears, prayers, or duties, nor in any thing ſhort of Chriſt. Preſs both for an intereſt in Chriſt, and for the aſſurance of it. Aſſurance is attainable, and actually attained by many; and it is moſt neceſſary for chearful obedience, for bearing the croſs, rejoicing in the Lord, giving thanks for redeeming love, and for performing many other duties of Chriſtianity.

DIRECT. IX. *Let the rational ſoul govern, and the body be ſubſervient to it,* 1 Cor. ix. 27. Alas, many, on the contrary, make their ſouls drudges to their bodies, and employ their noble faculties, wholly in deviſing how to pleaſe the fleſh. Ah, what fools are they who mind nothing but their bodies! Why? they are the greateſt enemies to their bodies, for by ſo doing they forfeit the eternal happineſs of their bodies, as well as of their ſouls. Whereas thoſe who prefer their ſouls, and mind them chiefly, they conſult the happineſs of their bodies as well as of their ſouls; for the body is never ſo well as in heaven; when faſhioned like Chriſt's glorious body, then it is in perfect and eternal health.

DIRECT. X. *Study both to live and die in the exerciſe of repentance and godly mourning for ſin,* Mat. v. 4. Some may think repentance a melancholy word, but it is one of the ſweeteſt words in all the book of God: It is a goſpel-duty, for the law or covenant of works admitted of no repentance; it is the effect of God's free love in and through Chriſt, to open the door of repentance

tance to fallen sinners; it cost Christ his blood to obtain it for us, and it is his free gift to us, Acts v. 31. Surely it is good news to hear that our Sovereign bids poor condemned criminals, that were brought to the place of execution, repent, and throw themselves down at his feet, and they shall get pardon. It was the sum both of John's and Christ's preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." It was the saying of a godly minister, "That if he were to die in the pulpit, he would wish to die preaching repentance; and if out of the pulpit, he would wish to die practising repentance." Augustine saith, "Repentance is the fittest disposition both for dying Christians and ministers;" and it is written of himself, that he died with tears in his eyes, weeping for sin. This is a duty never out of season; therefore study daily to keep up a tender and mourning frame, maintain contrition of heart and abhorrence of sin, and for that end take every day a turn upon mount Calvary. Many think it a sad thing to be repenting on earth, but it is a sadder thing to be repenting in hell. Seek repentance from God for Christ's sake; say with Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. "Turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God."

DIRECT. XI. *While you mind the necessary study of holiness, or inherent righteousness, let it never take the place of imputed righteousness*, Rom. x. 3. Psal. lxxi. 16. Inherent righteousness indeed is to be loved, but imputed righteousness only is to be trusted; for though inherent righteousness or holiness be a necessary qualification for heaven and salvation, and our evidence for it; yet it is imputed righteousness only that is the foundation of it, and our title to it. Let Christ's name be dear to you, "The Lord our Righteousness."

DIRECT. XII. *Employ Christ as your Surety in all cases, and in every strait go to him for relief*, Psal. cxix. 122. Isa. xxxviii. 14. Study therefore to be well acquainted with your Surety, and live near him. When the law demands payment of debt, and threatens you with prison, look to Christ, and cry, "Lord, be Surety for me; Lord, undertake for me." When you are called to perform duties, bear affliction, resist temptation,

struggle

ſtruggle with corruptions, engage with enemies, &c. look ſtill to Chriſt to be your Surety, and to undertake for you; plead with him to make out that promiſe to you, Deut. xxxiii 25. "As thy days, ſo ſhall thy ſtrength be."

Direct. XIII. *As you expect to live with Chriſt in heaven, ſtudy to live to Chriſt on earth*, 2 Cor. v. 15. Philip. i. 21. If you would live to Chriſt here, then you muſt make Chriſt's honour and glory your ultimate end in all your deſigns and actions; and make your moſt valuable intereſts ſubſervient to his intereſt and glory. Study an univerſal conformity to Chriſt's holy laws and precepts, and make it your great buſineſs to approve yourſelves to Chriſt in all things: Chuſe the things that pleaſe him, and carefully avoid every thing that is diſpleaſing to him. Pſal. cxix. 30. Iſa. lvi. 4.

Direct. XIV. *Cleave faſt to Chriſt, and the way of holineſs, whatever it may coſt you*, Acts xi. 23. 2 Tim. iii. 12. Think not the worſe of Chriſt and his ways, that they are perſecuted or reproached, and that few do own them. Chriſt foretold this, and ſaith, His way is a narrow way that few walk in. Join with the little flock to whom the kingdom is promiſed, which will abundantly compenſate all your ſufferings for Chriſt. Never follow a multitude to do evil, but cleave to Chriſt however few join you.

Direct. XV. *Seek the approbation of God above that of men*, 2 Cor. x. 18. What is the applauſe of worms to the ſmiles of the God of heaven? What would it avail us to have poor men like ourſelves to commend us, when the great God that made us doth condemn us? No matter though men cenſure or condemn our actions, if God approve and commend them. "It is a very ſmall thing to be judged of man's judgment, but he that judgeth us is the Lord," 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

Direct. XVI. *Be much employed in admiring God's redeeming love, and Chriſt's ſuretyſhip for us*, 1 John iii. 1, 16. This is the employment of the redeemed to all eternity, Rev. v. 9. And all who go to heaven muſt be acquainted with their work while here, Rev. i. 5. O what matter of eternal wonder and praiſe is there

God's

God's giving his dear Son to be our Surety and ſacrifice, and in the Son's voluntarily undertaking it!

Direct. XVII. *Delight much in thinking and ſpeaking of Chriſt, and particularly of his death and ſufferings for us,* Luke ix. 31. Rev. v. 9, 12. Oh, did he wade through a ſea of wrath, a ſea of blood, a ſea of ſorrows and ſufferings, to bring redemption to us? And will we ever forget him? The great God takes great pleaſure in the work of our redemption, and is well pleaſed with our Redeemer who undertook it. God repented that he made man, but never repented his redeeming man. Now, what God delights in, we ſhould delight in, eſpecially ſince we reap the benefit. We ſee, from Luke ix. and Rev. v. that the ſubject of Chriſt's death is matter of diſcourſe and praiſe to the glorified ſociety above. When Moſes and Elias came from heaven to mount Tabor to wait upon their transfigured Lord, they choſe Chriſt's death for the ſubject of their converſation: Why? Chriſt's death was the ſpring and cauſe of all their glory in heaven; neither Moſes nor Elias had ſhined there, had it not been for Chriſt's death. And ſhall not we, here below, delight in thinking, ſpeaking, and ſinging of this noble ſubject, which is the ground of all happineſs we either have, or hope for?

Direct. XVIII. *Treat objections raiſed againſt your cloſing with Chriſt, as ſuggeſtions of the enemy, that is ſeeking the ruin of your ſouls.* Reject them, as Chriſt did Peter's counſel, Matth. xvi. 23. "Get thee behind me, ſatan." As ſatan would have hindered Chriſt's dying for us; ſo he would hinder us from relying on Chriſt's death. Oh, (ſaith one) I am unworthy of any ſhare in Chriſt's death. *Anſ.* If you will have nothing but what you are worthy of, you muſt have nothing but hell. What was Abraham, Paul, Magdalene, the thief on the croſs, the idolatrous Corinthians, worthy of, before the Lord called them! Whatever be your unworthineſs, are you willing to apply Chriſt's blood? Then ſee what Chriſt ſaith to you, Rev. xxii. 17. "Whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." O but, (ſaith another) my ſins are heinous. *Anſ.* Canſt thou be more guilty than Chriſt is gracious? Doth he not promiſe

to

to waſh away ſins that are like ſcarlet and crimſon, Iſa. i. 18. and tells us, 1 John i. 7. that "his blood cleanſeth us from all ſin?" O bleſs him for that word *all.* Do not then believe ſatan, who would tempt thee to think that God hath caſt thee off; but, in ſpite of all he can ſay, ſtill believe God's faithful word, that there is mercy enough in God, merit enough in Chriſt, power enough in the Spirit, and room enough in the goſpel-offers and promiſes to you. Believe that word, Lam. iii. 25. "The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the ſoul that ſeeketh him." Say to thy ſoul, "Can this word of God fail? Has God made thee willing to wait and ſeek for him, and is he not willing to be found of thee? O my ſoul, doſt thou not ſee an infinite perfection in Chriſt's righteouſneſs, in Chriſt's blood and merits!" We may ſee an end of all earthly perfection, but we can ſee no end of Chriſt's perfection, which is infinite.

DIRECT. XIX. *Study much theſe great goſpel-leſſons of denying yourſelves, and exalting God's free grace,* Mat. xvi. 24 1 Cor. i. 31. The deſign of the goſpel is to caſt down ſelf and all idols, that God alone may be exalted; it is to make ſelf nothing, and God all, in point of wiſdom, ſtrength, righteouſneſs and glory; it is to take man wholly off himſelf, and caſt him on Chriſt for the whole of his ſalvation. It is a good ſign of a ſaving change upon the heart, when a man is thus humbled, and caſt into the goſpel mould, when ſelf-loving is turned into ſelf loathing, ſelf-admiring into ſelf-abhorring, ſelf-excuſing into ſelf accuſing, and ſelf-ſeeking into ſelf-denying.

DIRECT. XX. *Draw all your ſtrength for work and warfare from Chriſt, and preſent all your duties to God in Chriſt's name,* Iſa. xlv. 24. Col. iii. 27. Chriſt himſelf tells us, that "without him we can do nothing," John xv. 5. that is, nothing aright, or nothing that is acceptable to God. All our duties, if acceptable, muſt be done in Chriſt's ſtrength, and covered with his righteouſneſs. The apoſtle owns, that "of himſelf he could not ſo much as think a good thought, 1 Cor. iii. but he could do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthened

ened him," Philip. iv. 13. And hence he exhorts us to "be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," Eph. vi. 10. Let us think, before we go to duty, from whence our ſtrength for it muſt come, and ſtudy to fetch it in by faith, and believing ejaculations; and when we are aſſiſted, let us aſcribe the glory to Jeſus. Be aſſured of this alſo, that your moſt coſtly ſacrifices are unſavoury, if they be not perfumed with the fragrant incenſe of Chriſt's merits and interceſſion and that your faireſt "righteouſneſs is but as filthy rags" in God's ſight, if Chriſt's righteouſneſs do not cover it. Let it therefore be your conſtant language, "In the Lord Jeſus have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength," Iſa. xlv. 24.

DIRECT XXI. *In all the actions of your life, ſet the Lord ſtill before you,* Pal. xvi. 8.—xxv. 15. Acknowledge him in all your undertakings, and by faith and prayer commit your way to him, look to him for direction and ſucceſs, and depend on him as the Father of your mercies, the ſum of your bliſs, the ſtrength of your life, the ſtaff of your bread, the breath of your noſtrils, and the length of your days. Set the Lord always before you as your almighty Creator, your loving Redeemer, your rightful Owner, your careful Preſerver, your all-ſufficient Portion, your holy Pattern, your obſerving Witneſs, and your awful Judge. Undertake and perform all your actions under a ſenſe of God's all-ſeeing eye, and of your being accountable to him for all you do.

DIRECT. XXII. *Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,* 1 Cor. x. 31. We eat and drink to God's glory, when we do it for the end that our bodies may be fitted to ſerve our ſouls in honouring and ſerving God; and when we receive theſe mercies with thankfulneſs from the hand of God, and depend upon God's bleſſing to make them nouriſhing to us; and when we remember we are but ſtewards of what we poſſeſs, and are accountable to God the Proprietor, how we improve theſe earthly bleſſings to his honour and ſervice. You muſt alſo apply the buſineſs of your callings to God's glory, and this you do, when

you depend on God to bleſs you in it, and to proſper the work of your hands, and to arm you againſt all the ſins, ſnares and temptations, which your buſineſs may give occaſion to. You ought alſo to pay and receive viſits, and attend company, with an eye to God's glory, by bleſſing God for giving you friends and earthly accommodations, and looking to God for wiſdom to behave yourſelves ſo, as ye may do no harm to thoſe ye converſe with, nor get any harm from them: But, on the contrary, may be helped to do them good, and get benefit from them. You are alſo to undertake journies for God's glory, to look to him for protection by the way, and for direction, through-bearing, and ſucceſs.

DIRECT. XXIII. *Spend as much time as poſſible in ſecret prayer and converſe with God*, 1 Theſſ. v. 17. And that ye may do this with delight, endeavour to keep your hearts always in a ſerious praying frame, with an abiding impreſſion of God upon your ſpirits. There is a great difference betwixt a ſerious fit, and a ſerious frame. Ahab, Saul, Felix, and others, had their ſerious fits, but religious perſons only keep their ſouls in a ſerious frame, and ſtudy to be "in the fear of the Lord all the day long," as God enjoins, Prov. xxiii. 17. Prayer, that is acceptable to God, muſt be performed with faith, delight and livelineſs, and not with deadneſs and wearineſs, as if it were a taſk or burden. A life without prayer, or a prayer without life, are both hateful to the God of our life. He is the living God whom we worſhip, and hath no pleaſure in dead performances. But they who delight themſelves in duty, ſhall have the deſires of their hearts granted them, Pſal. xxxvii. 4. Surely, they who ſpend their days in faith and prayer, ſhall end their days in peace and comfort.

DIRECT. XXIV. *Make conſcience of family-religion, as well as of cloſet-duties*, Joſhua xxiv. 15. 2 Sam. vi. 20. Neglect not family-prayer nor praiſes, reading the word, catechiſing children and ſervants, ſanctifying the ſabbath, exhorting to duty, reproving and curbing ſin. Religion and reformation muſt begin in families, if we would wiſh it to be national and univerſal. God

is

is the author and founder of families, and therefore ſhould have homage from families as ſuch, by the morning and evening ſacrifice of prayer and praiſe. Go to him to bleſs family-mercies, ſupply family-wants, ſanctify family-trials, and redreſs family-grievances. Early train up children in the way they ſhould go, pray much for them, and for God's bleſſing on the means of their education.

DIRECT. XXV. *Begin and end every day with God,* Pſal. v. 3.——iv. 8. Let prayer be the key to open the heart to God in the morning, and lock it againſt all his enemies at night. Let no Chriſtian ſay, he cannot pray; for prayer is as neceſſary to him as breath, Lam. iii. 56. Let none ſay, they have not time for it; better take time from ſleep, than want time for prayer. Think it not enough to ſay your prayers, but mind you muſt pray your prayers, pray with ſincerity and fervour. Think with yourſelf, this morning may be my laſt morning, or this night my laſt night; for certainly that morning cometh of which you will never ſee the night; or the night in which you will never ſee the morning. Let the concluſion of every day put you in mind of the concluſion of all your days, by the long night of death, that will put an end to all your work, and bring you to count and reckon with your great Maſter about your work. O to ly down every night reconciled with him! O that we could ly down and leave our hearts with Chriſt, and compoſe our ſpirits ſo, as if we were not to awake till the heavens are no more.

DIRECT. XXVI. *Seeing none knoweth what a day may bring forth, ſpend every day as if it were to be your laſt,* Prov. xxvii. 1. Look on yourſelves as ſtanding every day at the door of eternity, and hundreds of diſeaſes and accidents ready to open the door to let you in. No doubt you have ſometimes apprehended yourſelves nearer death than you think yourſelves juſt now, yet it is certain that death was never ſo near you, nor judgment never ſo near you as they are at preſent. We, who ſtand every hour at the door of eternity, ſhould ſpend our precious hours with the greateſt frugality,

ſeeing the work we have in hand is ſoul-work, and work on which eternity depends; and the time we have to work it in, is very ſhort, and cannot be recalled. This ſhort life being only a paſſage to eternity, it ſhould be ſpent as a continual preparation for eternity. Surely thoſe who have immortal ſouls ſo near eternity, have other work to do than trifle away time in tippling, idle-talking, gaming, and ſuch diverſions.

DIRECT. XXVII. *Sojourn in this world as travellers, keeping ſo looſe from the world, as to be able to pack up and be gone from it upon ſhort warning*, 1 Pet. ii. 17. 1 Cor. vii. 29. 31. We have no continuing city nor certain abode here; therefore, let us always be ready to ariſe and depart. And if we would be right travellers towards Zion above, we muſt have Chriſt in our hearts, heaven in our eye, and the world under our feet. We muſt take God's Spirit for our guide, God's word for our rule, God's glory for our end, God's fear for our guard, God's people for our companions, God's praiſe for our recreation, and God's promiſes for our cordials. We muſt make religion our buſineſs, prayer our delight, holineſs our way, and heaven our home. O Zion's travellers, diſtinguiſh yourſelves from the men that dwell upon the earth. Let Chriſt always be precious to you, the word ſweet, ſin bitter, the world a wilderneſs, and death welcome. Let Chriſt's will be your will, Chriſt's diſhonour your affliction, Chriſt's cauſe your concern, Chriſt's ſucceſs your joy, Chriſt's day your delight, Chriſt's croſs your glory, Chriſt's ſufferings your meditation; Chriſt's wounds your refuge, Chriſt's blood your balm, Chriſt's righteouſneſs your cloathing, and Chriſt's preſence your heaven. While travelling here, let your hearts burn with love to Chriſt, love to think of Chriſt, love to hear of Chriſt, love to read of Chriſt, love to ſpeak of Chriſt, love to ſpeak for Chriſt, love to ſpeak to Chriſt.

DIRECT. XXVIII. *Keep up a lively ſenſe of ſacramental vows and engagements, and walk anſwerably thereto*, Pſal. lvi. 12, 13. You are under a ſacramental oath to be true and faithful ſoldiers to the Captain of your ſalvation, ſee that you fight his battles againſt his and your enemies, the devil, the world, and the fleſh.

Remember

Remember what your Captain hath done and ſuffered for you; let his love, as well as your oath, conſtrain you to abide by his ſtandard. Never go over to his enemies camp, nor keep correſpondence with them. Your glorious Captain gives you choice feaſts at his table to ſtrengthen and encourage you both for work and warfare; walk on in ſtrength of theſe ſpiritual meals, and grow ſtronger in grace, and more lively in all ſpiritual duties, pray more fervently, hear more attentively, meditate more frequently, partake more believingly, keep ſabbaths more delightfully, and walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleaſing. Your ſpiritual meals are deſigned for your nourithment, ſtrength and growth. Therefore, grow in grace. O believers, if you would lay up a treaſure of glory for yourſelves hereafter, lay up a treaſure of grace in your hearts juſt now; increaſe faith, love, heart-purity and humility. Whoever is rich in grace now, will be rich in glory hereafter: For what is grace but glory begun, and what is glory but grace perfected? Who then would not love grace, ſeeing it is begun glory, and a certain pledge of complete glory?

DIRECT. XXIX. *Improve the talents God gives you for his ſervice and glory*, Luke xix. 13. Remember you were not made for yourſelves only, but for ſociety and the benefit of others; therefore, employ your gifts, your ſubſtance, and whatever God has beſtowed, for the good of others; teach the ignorant, relieve the poor, ſtrengthen the weak, comfort thoſe that are caſt down, tell them your experiences, commend Chriſt as a choice Maſter and a lovely Saviour, and invite them to come "taſte and ſee that he is good;" pity thoſe who are ſtrangers to him, and pray for them. Be uſeful to others while you live, which will make your memory ſavoury when you die; many, alas, are ſo unprofitable in their lives, that when they come to die, neighbours ſcarce think their life worth a prayer, or their death worth a tear; but public-ſpirited and uſeful perſons are much lamented. Let every one in their ſtations, be active, and occupy their talents for God. Be aſſured, the more you do for God in this world, the more God will do for you in the world to come.

If

If the ſaints were capable of grief in heaven, it would be for their doing ſo little for God on earth.

Direct XXX. *Let all believers be thankful to God for his diſtinguiſhing favours and mercies to them,* Pſal. cxvi. 8. 12. A life of praiſe doth highly become the proofs of God's love to you. Fall down humbly before God, and aſcribe all to his free undeſerved grace! For, 'who is it that maketh thee to differ from another? What haſt thou, but what thou haſt received in a way of free gift?" O wonder at his free love, that has diſtinguiſhed you from others! has done that for you that he has not done for thouſands, for myriads, for millions! nor for thoſe who ſit in the ſame aſſembly, or dwell in the ſame houſe with you! O bleſs God who ſent his dear Son to ranſom you, and bring you out of priſon, when others are left in bondage! Who ſent his holy Spirit to open your eyes, when others are left blind; to open your ears, when others are left deaf; to open your hearts, when others are left ſhut; to open your mouths to praiſe free diſtinguiſhing love, when others are left dumb. Employ your tongues then to commend his love, and ſing his praiſe.

Direct. XXXI. *Since God diſtinguiſhes you from others, in his mercies to you, ſee that you diſtinguiſh yourſelves from others, in your ſervice to him,* Matth. v. 47. Are you Chriſtians indeed? You are under ſtronger obligations to live and act for Chriſt, than others: Why? You have both your new name and your new nature from Chriſt, which others have not; you are more nearly related to Chriſt than others; you are engaged to act for him, by more frequent and ſolemn vows than others; you have greater mercies beſtowed on you than others; others have but common-mercies, but you have covenant-mercies, mercies that accompany ſalvation. You have ſpiritual life within you, and divine influences which others want; not only the world, but Chriſt himſelf expects more from you than others; all which are powerful engagements on you, to do more for God than others. You know more of the things of God than others; you talk more of them, you profeſs more, you promiſe and engage to do more than others; yea, God has done unſpeakably more

more for you than others; and he may justly expect more from you than others; and put that question to you, "What do ye for me more than others?" Matth. v. 47.

Quest. Wherein should believers distinguish themselves, and do more for God than others? *Ans.* You should be witnesses for God, and testify against what is dishonouring to him, by abstaining from all known sin, and from these sins which are common and fashionable and little thought of by others. By reproving sin in others, and endeavouring to pluck them out of the fire. By keeping up family-religion even in the midst of business, and banishing all known vice from your dwellings, even minced oaths, rash using of God's name, idle walking or talking on the Lord's day, backbitings, evil-wishes, revengeful actions, unnecessary drinking or tippling, lottery-games, or pastimes of bad report, &c Be zealous for sabbath-holiness. Be meek and lowly in your carriage; commend Christ to others; speak for the honour of religion before those who disregard it; show special regard to those who are stamped with God's image, though mean or despised; be ready to forgive wrongs, and render good for evil; deal honestly and justly with all men; be sober and temperate in eating, drinking, sleep, apparel, &c. Guard against pride, passion, hasty and unguarded words; put great respect upon God's word and ordinances; be concerned for the enlarging of Christ's kingdom; never venture upon any known sin for the sake of worldly gain; make conscience of relative and stational duties, as to be good husbands, good wives, good parents, good children, good masters, good servants, good neighbours, &c. In such things as these, you are to do more for God than others.

Direct XXXII. *Be not content with a fair profession of religion, or with a form of godliness, and a name to live among men,* Tit. i. 16 2 Tim iii. 5. But endeavour to know and feel the power of godliness in your hearts, and to have your practice in all respects corresponding to your profession. If your practice be not answerable to what you profess, you sin against great light, you

you diſcredit religion, and tempt men to think it all hypocriſy. If a man live and die a mere profeſſor, it had been better for him he had lived and died a mere heathen.

Direct. XXXIII. *Keep always a watch upon the door of your lips*, Pſal. cxli. 3. ſeeing the tongue hath a world of iniquity in it, James iii. 6. Keep it as with a bridle, Pſal. xxxix. 1. and beg the Lord's help to keep it, and that he himſelf may ſet a watch upon your mouths, as the Pſalmiſt prays, Pſalm cxli. as knowing that no watchfulneſs or reſolution of our own is ſufficient for the governing of our tongues, without God's ſpecial grace; without this, the moſt wake-rife watchman watcheth in vain. Earneſtly ſeek for Chriſt's ſake, God's ſpecial grace to govern this unruly member, that it may not be ſuffered to utter words which may tend to the diſhonour of God, or to the hurt of men. Study to govern your tongues, by uſing God's name with reverence, ſpeaking always what is truth and what is ſeaſonable, uſeful and edifying, guarding carefully againſt lying, evil-ſpeaking, paſſionate, proud, and ſelf-exalting words, and againſt all raſh cenſures: You have need of great caution in ſpeaking, and to take heed either how ye commend yourſelves, or condemn others.

Direct. XXXIV. *Walk cheerfully and contentedly in every condition*, Acts viii. 39. Phil. iv. 11. Such a walk as this doth bring great credit to religion and the ſervice of our Redeemer. What though a believer be fed with the bread and water of affliction the moſt of his life, he hath other bread and another cup to ſweeten both; the forgiveneſs of ſin is a reviving cordial in every caſe. Have no will of your own diſtinct from God's will, but be reſigned to God's diſpoſing will in every thing, and let God's will and choice be always yours. If you cannot bring your condition to your mind, then you muſt labour to bring your mind to your condition, believing that the will of your heavenly Father is always beſt for you. Still remember that he hath engaged himſelf to be with you in all ſtates and conditions, and to order all things for your advantage: Be ſure then, he

he cannot deny himſelf; all his words are oaths for their certainty, and all his promiſes are the ſure mercies of David. Be content in every caſe; for ſince Chriſt is yours, "all things are yours." Well, then, let your covenanted God chooſe out your lot for you; for you may truſt that it ſhall be done with more wiſdom, and with more affection, than you can chuſe for yourſelf.

DIRECT. XXXV. If ye would manifeſt yourſelves to be truly religious both before God and man, *keep always the firſt and ſecond table of the law joined together, and make conſcience of both*, Matth. xxii. 37, &c. Love both God and your neighbour, be juſt and upright in all your dealings with men, acting always under a ſenſe of the all-ſeeing eye of your heavenly Father, who enjoins you to do the ſame to others, as ye would have them doing to you. Let a moral man try his religion by the duties of the firſt table of the law, and a profeſſor his by the duties of the ſecond table of the law. See that ye love God above all things, and prefer his worſhip and ſervice to every thing. Love God for himſelf, and love men principally for what is God-like in them.

DIRECT. XXXV. *Carefully guard againſt apoſtaſy and backſliding from God and his ways*, Heb. x. 38, 39. Be always jealous of your deceitful and treacherous hearts, knowing that they are bent to backſliding. A holy fear of departing from God, is a good means to keep us from departing from God. Therefore, endeavour to preſerve always a watchful and tender frame of heart, and be afraid of falling away, according to that word, Heb. iv. 1. If ye would preſerve yourſelves from total apoſtaſy, riſe ſpeedily after every fall by ſound repentance, and have recourſe to the blood of Chriſt. Ly not one day in any ſin, but riſe out of the puddle immediately, and get to the cleanſing Fountain, and renew your covenant with God, and beg more ſtrength, and faith to derive continual ſupplies from Chriſt your Head. Be often calling your ſouls to account, and aſking your hearts, What is become of the good frames, the melting ſenſe of ſin, the hungering deſires, the de-

lightful taſtes, the heavenly longings, the warm affections to Chriſt, that they ſometimes had. When ye attain to theſe, or to any of them, ſee that ye commit them to Chriſt's keeping, ſaying with the Pſalmiſt, "Lord, be ſurety for thy ſervant for good. *Laſtly*, Conſider the dreadful caſe of an apoſtate, as deſcribed by our Lord and his apoſtle, Matth. xii. 43, 44. 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. That man's caſe becomes far more miſerable than it was at firſt. What a ſad caſe is it for a ſoul to fall back into hell, after it had climbed near the gates of heaven? None fall ſo deeply into hell as thoſe, who fall backward into it.

DIRECT. XXXVII. *Be watchful againſt all ſin, and particularly your darling or conſtitutional ſin, the ſin that moſt eaſily beſets you*, Pſal. xviii. 23. Heb. xii. 1. Our adverſary the devil, well knows this ſin, and on what ſide we may be attacked with the greateſt ſucceſs; and to be ſure, he will bring his ſtrongeſt temptations thither, and employ his moſt ſubtile wiles and devices, that way to enſnare us. It were happy for us if we were ſtill watching againſt him, and could ſay with the apoſtle, "We are not ignorant of his devices." You are likewiſe to watch againſt all ſin whatſomever, ſins of omiſſion as well as of commiſſion. Groſs outbreakings make conſcience to ſtart at their appearance, but it is not ſo alarmed with the neglect of duties. But if conſcience be awakened, ſins of omiſſion will lie heavy as well as ſins of commiſſion. Some eminent Chriſtians, who have lived the moſt circumſpect lives, when they have come to die and reflect on their bypaſt time, have been put to cry, "Lord, in ſpecial forgive my ſins of omiſſion. Venture not to live in any frame, courſe or practice, that you would not adventure to die in, ſeeing you know not but your next ſtep may be into the grave. Guard againſt all theſe ſins and evils now in the time of your health, that may put thorns in your pillow when ſickneſs and the harbingers of death approach, ſuch as "miſpending of precious time, neglect of prayer, or reading of the Scriptures, formality and luke-warmneſs in religion, earthly mindedneſs, unthankfulneſs for mercies, and miſcarrying after

after them. Neglect of improving Christ, quenching the Spirit, neglect of convictions, breaking of vows, falling from your first love, returning to old sins you had mourned over, sinning against light, and after afflictions," &c.

DIRECT. XXXVIII. *Be heartily concerned for the coming and enlarging of Christ's kingdom in the world*, Matth. vi. 10. Psal. lxxii. 19. Bewail it that his flock is so little, his subjects so few, when satan's are so numerous. Bewail the unsuccessfulness of the gospel, the restraint of the Spirit, the divisions among Christians, and the many hindrances of the progress of Christianity. Lament the wrongs and dishonours done to God by others; cry and wrestle for the outpouring of the Spirit, both at home and abroad; pray for the revival of God's work in these lands, amidst these declining years; and in enquiring after public news have a view to this, be concerned for the interest and welfare of Christ's kingdom through the world, for the accomplishment of God's promises concerning the destruction of Antichrist, Babylon's downfal, the inbringing of the Jews, and the subduing of the nations. And when you hear of any appearance of God's arising to countenance his word, and conquer sinners to himself, whether at home or abroad, rejoice at the news, reckon them good tidings of great joy, and bless the Lord for them with all your hearts. It is most pleasing and acceptable to God, to see his people heartily concerned for the prosperity of Jerusalem.

DIRECT. XXXIX. *Be busy laying up a stock for a sick-bed or death-bed, when all the comforts of life will be tasteless to you*, 1 Tim. vi. 19. Lay up a stock of faith and patience, a stock of evidences or divine love, and of your interest in Christ, a stock of divine promises and experiences of God's loving kindness, which may be supporting to you in the day of sharp trials. When mariners go to sea, they victual the ship, and provide for a storm. And ought not we to foresee the storms of affliction, of sickness and of death, and provide and lay up for them? It will be sad, if, when the Bridegroom is come, we have our oil then to buy, when the

market is over. Now is the the time for providing oil; now is the market of grace; now is the acceptable time; now is the day of ſalvation.

DIRECT. XL. *Be looking and longing for the eternal ſupper of the Lamb*, Philip i. 23. Rev. xix. 9. Hungry ſouls, who have taſted the love of Jeſus, long for the Lamb's ſupper below, that they may enjoy communion with him here, and this makes them cry, When ſhall the opportunity return? When ſhall I come and appear before God? When ſhall I again ſee his power and glory in the ſanctuary? When ſhall I again taſte his love and goodneſs in the ſacrament? And yet theſe are but ſmall foretaſtes of the Lamb's ſupper above. What is our drinking of the fruit of the vine here, to our drinking it new with Chriſt in his Father's kingdom? Therefore, look out, and long for the time when the day ſhall break, and the ſhadows flee away, and the marriage of the Lamb ſhall be triumphantly ſolemnized and completed with the church his eſpouſed bride, whom he will then lead into the King's palace, where their tranſient glances ſhall be changed into immediate viſion, and their ſhort taſtes into everlaſting feaſting and fulneſs. "O bleſſed are they for ever, who are called to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb:" Theſe are the true ſayings of God. I believe, Lord help my unbelief. Amen.

Unto the foreſaid *Directory*, I ſhall ſubjoin a variety of *Scripture Songs*, for the uſe and benefit of *Zion's travellers*; and theſe I deſign as a ſupplement to my *goſpel-hymns*, publiſhed ſome months ago; and which addition I underſtand will be agreeable to the deſires of not a few.

As to the duty and advantage of praiſing God by ſinging ſuch *hymns and ſpiritual ſongs*, according to the Apoſtle's repeated inſtructions, I ſhall add nothing to what I have ſaid thereanent, in my preface to the foreſaid *Goſpel-hymns*, but refer my reader thereto.

SCRIPTURE

SCRIPTURE-SONGS

FOR

ZION's TRAVELLERS,

IN

THEIR WAY TO HEAVEN.

Iſa. xxxv. 10. *The Ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return, and come to* Zion *with Songs.*

Pſal. cxxxviii. 5. *They ſhall ſing in the ways of the Lord.*

SONG I.

The Primitive Communicants.

1 CHRIST's friends at firſt oft broke his bread,
Inſpir'd with love divine,
They drank the Spirit of their Head,
As well's the ſacred wine,
2 They ſhew'd his death with heart and ſoul,
And feaſted on his love;
His blood and wounds they did extol,
And ſung like ſaints above.
3 Lord, grant us part of that love-flame,
Which in their hearts abode;
That made them witneſs for the Lamb,
And ſuffer for their God.
4 Warm ſhow'rs from heav'n ſend down on us,
That frozen hearts may yield,
And turn us from a wilderneſs
Into a fruitful field.
5 Thy people, Lord, lament for thee,
And ſore thy abſence mourn;
They long thy face again to ſee:
To goſpel-feaſts return.
6 Come to thy table, with us ſit,
Our grudges all remove,
Unite our hearts, and make us fit
To keep the feaſt of love.
7 Cauſe ſtreams of living waters flow
In channels of thy grace;
And let the north and ſouth wind blow,
Our ſtraitnings to releaſe.

8 Thy Spirit's temple make our hearts,
And with us ſtill abide;
Make his convictions pierce like darts,
Let us no more backſlide.
9 Thy hidings are a bitter cup,
Like flowers we fade and mourn,
We droop, we grieve, and can't look up,
Till thou our Sun return.
10 Lord charge not on us former guilt,
Let all thine anger ceaſe;
Look to the blood on Calv'ry ſpilt,
And bid us go in peace.

SONG II.

The HOLY SPIRIT *fits us for the* HOLY TABLE.

1 O FATHER of our dying Lord,
Hear thy Son's ſpeaking blood,
Fulfil to us his gracious word;
Send down the heavenly food.
2 Thy Spirit grant, for which he pray'd,
To glorify thy Son;
His promis'd influences ſhed,
That wonders may be done.
3 Glad we'll his death commemorate,
Ay till he come again;
Bleſs both the word and ſacrament,
Take thy great power and reign.
4 Chriſt's table now ſtand's furniſhed
With bleſſings of beſt kinds;
Pardon and *Peace* bought with his blood,
Choice food for troubled minds.
5 Give faith to feed and view his love,
His ſtripes and wounds each one,
How he was jeer'd that's fear'd above,
Blaſphem'd and ſpit upon.
6 In's hands and feet we ſee the nails
Piercing his tender veins;
For us each wound the bluſhing ground,
With blood infinite ſtains.
7 Black clouds for us o'erwhelm'd his ſoul,
Sore was his agony;
When he cry'd, *My God, my God, why*
Why haſt thou forſaken me?

8 Thy matchleſs love we'll praiſe aloud,
Our ſouls it doth conſtrain,
To love and live to thee our God,
Who for our ſins waſt ſlain.
9 May I no more to pray'r be dragg'd,
To ſerve thee let me run.
May I in duties keep my courſe,
Like to the riſing ſun.
10 Unto the Lamb that once was ſlain,
Be praiſe and glory giv'n,
By all that dwel upon the earth,
And all the hoſts of heav'n.

SONG III.

CHRIST's SACRIFICE, *the only Foundation of our* TRUST.

1 SO great's the guilt of fallen man,
None could his pardon buy;
Great muſt it be, when God himſelf
Muſt for his creature die!
2 Slain beaſts for ſin could not atone,
Such off'rings all were vain,
Had not the Father giv'n his Son
For ſinners to be ſlain.
3 Had the whole church been offer'd up,
As one burnt ſacrifice;
Our ſmalleſt debt this could not pay,
Creatures could not ſuffice.
4 But mercy, in this hopleſs caſe,
A ſacrifice prepares;
A Lamb of all ſufficient worth,
Which diſſipates our fears.
5 This Sacrifice more precious
Than all created things,
To us eternal happineſs
In ſoul and body brings.
6 This is the ſure Foundation-ſtone,
Which God in Zion lays,
For men to build their hopes upon,
He's bleſt that on it ſtays.
7 Tho' earth's foundations be remov'd,
This Rock ſtill ſtandeth faſt,
By ſtorms unmov'd, on this alone
My anchor I will caſt.

8 The Lamb, our Rock, for us did die,
For us roſe from the dead,
For us he did aſcend on high,
For us his blood doth plead.
9 O bleeding Lamb, ſhew me thy name
Writ in thy book of life;
Then I will long to be with thee,
Out of this land of ſtrife.
10 To worſhip with the heav'nly hoſt,
JEHOVAH one in three,
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt,
To all eternity.

SONG IV.

The DISTRESSED SOUL *looking to the* LAMB *for Pity.*

1 COME ſee my caſe, O bleeding Lamb,
In mercy take me as I am,
Quite naked, and put cloathing on
A ſtranger, and make me a ſon.
2 Burden'd with guilt, and give me eaſe,
A bond-man, and my ſoul releaſe,
All vile, not fit to join thy ſaints;
A creature all made up of wants.
3 By nature I have nothing good,
All muſt be brought me by thy blood;
But ſince thy wounds are open'd wide,
I'll hope in Jeſus crucify'd.
4 Thy blood mens foreſt plagues doth cure,
Thy wounds their backward hearts allure,
Thy blood ſtrange changes works in men,
For wond'rous works the Lamb was ſlain!
5 Thy Bible doth thy pity ſhew,
I reſt on thy words ſweet and true,
Souls come to me, and no more doubt,
For him that comes I'll not caſt out.
6 Renew my ſoul, plant grace this day,
Give me a heart to mourn and pray,
O kill in me this rebel ſin,
Reſtore thy image me within.
7 For theſe things I to thee do come;
Caſt me not out, ſince there is room,
Make good thy words, and hear my cries,
For on thy truth my ſoul relies.

8 O dearest Lamb, didst thou not bleed,
To purchase every thing we need?
Doth not thy blood still run to heal
Distressed souls, their plagues who feel?
9 We feel our sores, Lord, heal us soon,
And in us let thy will be done.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
One God in Christ, that saves the lost.

SONG V.

A call to wonder at CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS, *from* LOVE *to us.*

1 BEHOLD Christ in a bloody sweat,
Which all his garments stains!
See four wide wounds in's hands and feet,
When big nails pierc'd his veins!
2 Behold his soul oppressed sore,
And in the greatest pain!
How heavy was the wrath he bore,
Of which he did complain?
3 Yet, Lord, whilst our sins fill'd to thee
This bitter wrathful cup;
A blessed feast thou mad'st, that we
Might at thy table sup!
4 O friends of Christ, draw near his throne,
To him thank-offerings bring,
For *in his temple ev'ry one*
Should of his glory sing.
5 Let men him love; and sin abhor
Which caus'd him grief and pain,
Let all the angels still adore
The Lamb for sinners slain!
6 With warm affections let us bless
Our great high-priest above,
And ev'ry day admire and praise
The wonders of his love!
7 From love he left his throne on high,
Lodg'd in a virgin's womb!
Love brought him to the cross to die!
Love laid him in a tomb!
8 Love rais'd him up, and took him back,
To heaven to make us room!
From thence return he'll for our sake,
In love to bring us home!

9 From love he wearies not to plead,
And ſhew his bleeding hands,
Since he hath juſtice ſatisfy'd,
Our freedom he demands.
10 Thy blood hath done all things for me,
I'll glory in thy croſs;
My beſt things I'll give up for thee,
I count them all but loſs.

SONG VI.

From 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.—7. *Being a* PROPHECY *of* CHRIST, *and king* David's SWAN SONG *in the views of death.*

1 A RULER juſt o'er men ſhall riſe,
In God's fear rule ſhall he,
As morning light ſprings from the ſkies,
So welcome ſhall he be.
2 Like riſing ſun he ſcatters all
The black ſhades of the night,
No clouds this morning darken ſhall,
Refreſhing is its light.
3 He ſhall the frozen earth ſolace,
Like ſun-ſhine after rain,
Whoſe warming beams revive the graſs,
And make all ſpring again.
4 I'm griev'd, all prove not good and juſt,
Who from my loins do ſpring;
But glad to ſee he ſprings from me,
That's Zion's bleſſed King.
5 A King that ſaves us from our foes,
In hearts rules by his might;
With his juſt laws let all men cloſe,
Obey him, it's his right.
6 Although my houſe be not with God
Such as it ought to be;
Yet he hath, thro' Meſſiah's blood,
A cov'nant made with me.
7 A covenant which life doth bring,
And evermore endure,
Well ordered in ev'ry thing,
With promiſes moſt ſure.
8 My heart's deſire is towards it,
'Tis my ſalvation,
Altho' he doth not come as yet
For to redreſs what's wrong.

9 But Belial's ſons who are his foes,
God ſmite them will in ire,
He'll them conſume who him oppoſe,
Like thorns burnt up with fire.

SONG VII.

The Saints TRIUMPH *over death.* From Job xix. 25. &c. 1 Cor. xv, 43. 53. Philip. iii. 21. Ezek. xvi. 14.

1 THOUGH on me heavy trials come,
And death's ſtroke on me fall,
My faith and hope ſhall not ſuccumb,
But triumph o'er them all.
2 I know that my Redeemer lives,
Who pleads my cauſe with God,
To ſave each ſoul who him believes,
He comes to ſhed his blood.
3 Then for a while he'll go away,
But will return again,
And on the earth, at latter day,
Stand with a glorious train.
4 Though in the grave my body fall,
And worms do it conſume,
Ev'n ſkin and fleſh, blood, bones, and all,
Yet death I'll overcome.
5 My Lord will raiſe me from the duſt,
He'll clothe my bones with fleſh,
I'll ſee my God whom now I truſt,
Which will my ſoul refreſh.
6 That fleſh which all conſumed was,
The very ſame ſhall riſe;
Yea, I will ſee Chriſt's lovely face,
With theſe my very eyes.
7 Though for a time my duſt be loath'd,
Moſt beautiful I'll be,
My mortal body ſhall be cloth'd
With immortality.
8 Like Chriſt's own body I will ſhine,
With raiment white as light.
His comelineſs is ever mine:
This ev'ry ſaint makes bright.

SONG VIII.

CHRIST's Eternal Love to Mankind.

From Prov. viii. 27. *to the end.*

1 WHEN the creation was begun
By God's almighty hand,
Then I, his own Eternal Son,
Concurr'd in the command.

2 I joined to his counsels wise,
Lost mankind to redeem;
I was my Father's chief delight,
And I rejoic'd in him.

3 And in the earth, when it for man
Was fram'd with divine art;
With pleasure I foresaw the Church,
Its habitable part.

4 Before the light was made to shine,
My heart was set on man;
My thoughts, from all eternity,
On his salvation ran.

5 The foresight of mens misery,
Made me engage for them
To be their help; for my delights
Were with the sons of men.

6 O children, then to me give ear;
They're blest my ways that chuse:
Be wise, and my instruction hear;
They're fools who it refuse.

7 Blest is the man that hears my word,
And doth attend my gates;
Who watchfully looks for the Lord,
And at his door-posts waits.

8 Blest is the man that findeth me,
With me he'll live above,
And have, thro' all eternity,
God's favour and his love.

9 But his own soul he doth injure,
Who slights my offers free;
And those who hate my precepts pure,
Court death eternally.

SONG IX.

From Solomon's Song, chap. i. *Being a Dialogue betwixt* CHRIST *and his* SPOUSE.

SPOUSE.

1 LIKE ſweeteſt ointment ſmells thy name,
Dear JESUS, unto me.
Hence virgin-ſouls ſend out a flame
Of holy love to thee.

2 O draw me, and we'll run to thee;
Bleſt King, thou didſt me bring
Into thy chamber, hence will we
In thee rejoice and ſing.

3 More than the taſte of richeſt wine,
Thy love think on we will;
Moſt coſtly was thy love-deſign;
The upright love thee ſtill.

4 Tell me, good Shepherd, whom I love,
Where thy dear ſheep are fed;
Shew me the paths wherein they move,
And where they find a ſhade.

5 Leave me not in a wand'ring courſe,
Like thoſe who loſe their way:
With flocks of thy competitors
Let me not go aſtray.

CHRIST.

6 Art thou bewilder'd, my fair one,
And canſt not find thy reſt?
Come, follow my direction,
I'll ſhew thee what is beſt.

7 In footſteps of my flock go on,
The ſhepherds tents keep nigh;
Thy kids and young ones bring along,
So thou ſhalt meet with me.

SPOUSE.

8 While at his table ſits the King,
My ſpikenard ſmelleth ſweet:
My graces languiſhing do ſpring,
With this Sun's quick'ning heat.

9 Dear Jeſus, as a bunch of myrrh,
Shall in my boſom lie;
To lodge with me he'll not demur,
While nightly ſhades do ſtay.

SONG X.

From Song. iii. 1. to 9.

CHRIST.

1 I AM the Roſe of Sharon's field,
The Lily of the vale;
I ſweetneſs and delight do yield,
When earthly glories fail.
2 As lilies ſhine amidſt the thorns,
So doth my love the bride;
The daughters want what her adorns,
Though they live by her ſide.

SPOUSE.

3 As th' apple tree doth far excel
The foreſt's barren growth;
So my Love outſhines mortals all,
Though in their blooming youth.
4 Under his ſhade, with great delight,
I ſat down for to reſt;
I found ſolace, his heav'nly fruit
Was ſweet unto my taſte.
5 He brought me to his houſe of wine,
My faintings to allay;
The banner of his love divine
O'er me he did diſplay.
6 Bring ſtrength'ning flagons unto me,
With cordials from above;
Fetch me ſweet apples from the tree,
For I am ſick of love.
7 When thus my fainting ſoul did cry
For grace me to uphold,
My tender-hearted Lord drew nigh,
His arms me did infold.
8 All things without me and within,
I charge to ſtand in awe,
To wake or grieve my love with ſin,
Leſt from me he withdraw.
9 Though griev'd, he doth return to me,
For lo! his voice I hear,
O'er hills of guilt him leap I ſee,
My mourning ſoul to cheer.
10 He haſtes to me like hart or roe,
Our dark walls he makes light;
Through lattices himſelf doth ſhow,
With comelineſs moſt bright.

SONG XI.

From Song ii. 10. to the end.

CHRIST.

1 RISE up ſaid Chriſt, my faireſt one,
Come thou away to me;
The winter-ſtorms of wrath are gone,
I bore them all for thee.

2 From barren ground the flow'rs do ſpring,
Men hear the turtle's voice;
The drooping birds begin to ſing,
And ſad hearts to rejoice.

3 Young figs and grapes do now appear,
And yield a ſweet perfume;
The heav'nly vine faint hearts doth cheer,
Riſe up, my love, and come.

4 My dove that lodgeſt in the rock,
In clefts of my deep wounds;
And doſt to me in ſecret look,
When in thee grief abounds:

5 Lift up thy face and voice to me;
Theſe pleaſe mine eye and ear;
Thy graces all I love to ſee,
Thy voice of pray'r to hear.

6 Take us the foxes, whoſe deſigns
Are vineyards to annoy,
The little foxes, which the vines
And tender grapes deſtroy.

SPOUSE.

7 My Love is mine, my ſoul's delight,
And I am alſo his;
Among his ſaints, thoſe lilies white,
His place of feeding is:

8 There he abides till break of day,
When ſhadows all ſhall flee;
Till then, come like a hart or roe,
O'er Bether hills to me.

SONG XII.

From Song iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11.

SPOUSE.

1 ALL's dark when Jeſus hides his face,
Night-ſhades fall me upon;
Deſertion is a weary caſe,
When Chriſt my Love is gone.

2 I on my bed my loſs did mind,
I ſought him thus alone;
My drowſy ſearch him did not find,
Vain was my ſlothful moan.

3 I'll riſe, and round the city go,
Through ſtreets, broad-ways, and lanes;
This way I ſought my Love, but lo!
Succeſsleſs were my paines.

4 The city watchmen found me out,
Their doctrine touch'd my caſe:
Ah, where's he! Can you ſolve my doubt?
None of them brought me eaſe.

5 When means and duties prov'd ſo weak,
Beyond them all I paſt:
When I ſome ſteps from them did make,
I found my Love at laſt.

6 I him embrac'd, and held him faſt,
Till once I got him brought
Into my mother's dwellings waſte,
To ſtrengthen what he wrought.

7 Since he's come in, I do you charge,
Who Salem's daughters are,
By roes and hinds which run at large,
Our joys you do not mar.

8 Let ſin or earth no motion make,
For to diſturb his reſt:
Let none preſume my love to wake,
Until it pleaſe him beſt.

9 O, Zion's daughters, all go forth,
Behold king Solomon,
Ev'n Chriſt our King, of higher worth,
Wearing his glorious crown;

10 Wherewith his mother crown'd his head,
On his eſpouſal day,
That day on which his heart was glad,
Him love and praiſe for ay.

SONG XIII.

From Song iv. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16.

CHRIST.

1 THOU art all fair when in thy dreſs,
My love, thou'rt fair to me;
When clothed with my righteouſneſs,
No ſpot is ſeen in thee.

2 My ſpouſe, come off from Lebanon,
And mounts of vanity:
Let all the world's deceits alone,
And come alongſt with me.

3 By faith look from Amana's top,
Shenir and Hermon fair;
From dens of prey, behold with hope
The land beyond compare.

4 My ſpouſe, thou doſt my love enhance,
And draw'ſt my heart to thee,
With thy neck-chains, and with a glance
Of thy believing eye.

5 Thy love to me more grateful is,
Than wine of any kind;
Thy graces more than fragrant ſpice
Acceptance with me find.

6 Thy lips drop ſweet; and from thy tongue
Do milk and honey flow:
Thy garments ſmell as Lebanon,
Which I on thee beſtow.

7 A garden fair, inclos'd by grace,
My ſpouſe thou art to me;
I chus'd thee from the wilderneſs,
With fine ſprings furniſh'd thee.

SPOUSE.

8 If I thy garden be, O Lord,
Cauſe heaven's wind awake,
Sweet quick'ning gales to me afford,
My graces lively make.

9 Sharp northern blaſts ſend to convince,
And cauſe the ſouth wind blow;
With breathings warm aſſiſt my saints,
And make my ſpices flow.

10 Then let my Love his preſence ſweet
Unto his garden grant,
That he may eat his pleaſant fruit,
Which he himſelf did plant.

SONG XIV.

From Song v. 1, 2, 3, 4.

CHRIST.

1 My Spouſe, to anſwer thee I'm come
Into my garden fair;
My myrrh and ſpice of ſweet perfume,
With pleaſure I do ſhare.
2 On honey, wine, and milk I feaſt;
All friends, come eat with me,
And drink my wine of heavenly taſte,
Yea, drink abundantly.

SPOUSE.

3 While Chriſt invites, my ſoul prevails;
Yet ſomething wakes in me,
To hearken to Chriſt's knocks and calls,
His voice ſpeaks preſſingly.

CHRIST.

4 Open to me, my Father's child;
Open to me, my love;
Open to me, my undefil'd;
Open to me, my dove.
5 From love I'm ſtanding at thy door,
Thy heart caſt open ſoon;
A midnight ſhow'r of wrath I bore,
To ſave thee when undone.

SPOUSE.

6 I am undreſs'd, and reſt is ſweet,
From bed I cannot riſe;
How ſhall I now defile my feet?
Thus ſloth did me entice.
7 By the key-hole, my well belov'd
His hand of pow'r put in;
So that my bowels all were mov'd,
For being ungrate to him.
8 When I rouz'd up, obey'd his knock,
My hands dropt pleaſantly

With oil of myrrh, left on the lock;
Which made the bolt to fly.
9 To my belov'd I open'd faſt,
Who to my grief was gone!
I fainted, when his ſpeeches paſt
I mournfully thought on.
10 I ſought him then with carefulneſs;
But found he could not be:
I call'd on him in this diſtreſs,
He did not anſwer me.
11 The watchmen who do go their rounds,
And keep the city-wall,
Abus'd me and did give me wounds,
And tore away my veil.

SONG XV.

A DIALOGUE *betwixt the Spouse and Daughters of Jeruſalem, from* Song v. 8. *to the end.*

SPOUSE.

1 O Salem's race, if you him find,
I charge you tell my caſe;
I'm ſick of love, ſore pain'd in mind,
He only can me eaſe.

DAUGHTERS.

2 O faireſt one, we fain would know,
The object of thy love;
What charms he hath, that thou doſt ſo,
Prize him all men above.

SPOUSE.

3 My love is white and ruddy too,
The chief of thouſands ten;
His innocence and ſuff'rings do
Him beautify to men.
4 His bleſſed head doth far excel
The gold that is moſt fine,
His locks are black and curled well,
They raven-like do ſhine.
5 His eyes are like the eyes of doves,
When they in flocks are met
Near water-ſtreams, which they do love,
Milk-waſh'd and fitly ſet.

6 His cheeks are like the ſweeteſt flow'rs,
And beds where ſpices grow;
His lips like lilies are, from whence
Sweet ſmelling myrrh doth flow.
7 As rings of gold with beryl ſet,
So do his hands appear;
His belly bright as iv'ry
O'erlaid with ſapphires clear.
8 His legs like marble pillars are,
Which on gold ſockets went,
Like Lebanon his face is fair,
As cedars excellent.
9 His mouth that makes ſweet promiſes,
To ev'ry ſaint is ſweet:
Yea, he all over lovely is,
View him from head to feet.
10 O daughters of Jeruſalem,
This is my Love and Friend,
For whom none can deviſe a name,
Or proper emblems find.

SONG XVI.

The DIALOGUE *continued.* Song vi.

DAUGHTERS.

1 O Faireſt bride, we fain would know,
Where's thy beloved gone?
Tell us that we with thee may go,
To ſeek this matchleſs one.

SPOUSE.

2 My love is gone to heav'n above,
Yet doth he condeſcend
To come into his garden here,
And beds of ſpice attend.
3 In meetings of his ſaints he's found,
Theſe gardens of delight,
He's there to bring them rich ſupplies,
And gather lilies white.
4 To my beloved I belong,
And my belov'd to me;
To feed among the lily flow'rs,
Great pleaſure taketh he.

CHRIST.

5 O who is ſhe that looketh forth,
Like to the morning light?
When it darts out to chaſe away
The darkneſs of the night.
6 Fair as the moon, clear as the ſun,
With dazzling beams array'd;
Yet like an army terrible,
With banners all diſplay'd *. * Chap. vi. 10.
7 She comes up from the wilderneſs,
She walks and always leans
On her beloved; for her heart
From all things elſe ſhe weans.

SONG XVII.

CHRIST's *ſufferings for us.* From Iſa. liii.

1 WHO hath believ'd the faithful word,
Which we to men declare?
Who feels the arm of God the Lord
Diſplayed and made bare?
2 Meſſiah, like a weak plant grows,
A root from ground that's dry,
No outward beauty he aſſumes,
To draw the carnal eye.
3 Rejected and deſpis'd is he,
Through ſinners unbelief;
A man of ſorrows all his days,
And well acquaint with grief.
4 We hid our faces when he came,
To take our wrathful lot;
Deſpis'd he was, and put to ſhame,
And we eſteem'd him not.
5 Of griefs and ſorrows all his time,
For us he bore the load;
But ah, we judg'd that for his crime,
He ſmitten was of God.
6 But he for our tranſgreſſions
Was wounded and abus'd,
His ſoul for our iniquities
Moſt grievouſly was bruis'd.
7 On him was laid our chaſtiſement,
By which our peace he ſeal'd;

Sharp bloody ſtripes he underwent,
Whereby our wounds are heal'd.
8 All we like ſheep from God have ſtray'd,
And did our own ways chuſe;
And theſe our ſins God on him laid,
Which love would not refuſe.
9 Oppreſs'd and wrong'd our Surety ſtood,
Accuſed of untruth;
To ſlaughter went he as a Lamb,
And open'd not his mouth.
10 Before the ſhearers, like a ſheep,
He dumb and ſilent lies;
He meekly goes thro' waters deep,
Without repining cries.
11 His ſoul in trav'ling anguiſh lies,
His pains were multiply'd;
But when the bleſſed fruit he ſees
He is well ſatisfy'd.

SONG XVIII.

A Thanksgiving *for* Redeeming Love: *From Rom.* v. and *Heb.* xiii.

1 WHEN we were deſtitute of ſtrength
Ourſelves to help and ſave;
For the ungodly, Chriſt, at length,
His life a ranſom gave.
2 Scarce any for a righteous man
Will dare his life to ſtake;
And for a good man it were much
Such an exchange to make.
3 But God his matchleſs love commends,
When his moſt glorious Son
Dy'd for us while unrighteous,
Vile ſinners, and undone.
4 Since by his blood, Chriſt us from ſin
Doth juſtify and free,
Then ſurely from the wrath to come,
We ever ſafe ſhall be.
5 If Chriſt for enemies to God
Did die to end the ſtrife;

Much more when reconciled thus,
He'll ſave us by his life.
6 Yea more than ſo, we joy in God,
Thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord:
The great atonement we receive,
And ſo obey his word.
7 Now he that's Lord of quick and dead,
The God of love and peace,
That from the grave brought Chriſt our Head,
And him to life did raiſe;
8 Who, as the Shepherd great and good,
His life for us did grant,
And did eſtabliſh with his blood,
Th' eternal covenant;
9 May he in us his work fulfill,
Till he us perfect make,
Still ſtrength'ning us to do his will
For our Redeemer's ſake;
10 And work in us what his word ſays,
Is pleaſing him before;
Thro' Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be praiſe,
And glory evermore.

SONG XIX.

MATCHLESS LOVE *in the* GIFT *of* CHRIST!

From John iii. 14. *to* 17.

1 O WONDROUS divine love to men!
When wrath 'gainſt us did ſwell,
God took our nature, bore our guilt,
To ſave our ſouls from hell.
2 As Moſes in the wilderneſs,
Did lift high on a pole
A brazen ſerpent, for ſtung men
To view and be made whole;
3 So Jeſus Chriſt the Antitype,
Was lifted up on high
Upon the croſs, that wounded ſouls
Might look and healed be.
4 And there, he ſays, whoe'er believes
In him unfeignedly,

Shall never periſh in their ſins,
But live eternally.
5 God lov'd the world ſo, as to give
His Son to dwell in clay,
And die, that all who in him truſt,
Might live with God for ay,
6 Good news! that Chriſt there twice declares,
All who in believe
Are ſafe from hell, and ever ſhall
With God in heaven live;
7 And that his Son God did not ſend
A loſt world to condemn;
But by his blood he did intend
To ſave condemned men.
8 Believers all with Chriſt ſhall live,
And ne'er condemned be;
The broken law he ſatisfied,
Them for to juſtify.
9 But vengeance juſt for ever lies
On all the rebel race,
Who God's eternal Son deſpiſe,
And ſcorn his offer'd grace.
10 Obey Chriſt's call, who ſaves the loſt,
Serve God that's One in Three;
To Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt
Give praiſe eternally.

SONG XX.

God's Love *in* Christ *unalterable*: *From* Rom. viii. 31. *to the end.*

1 GOD's love in Chriſt tranſcends our thoughts,
In ſaving men from woe;
If God 's for us, and ſtands our friend,
Who then can be our foe?
2 Since God for us ſpar'd not his Son,
But gave him up to die;
His leſſer gifts he'll not refuſe,
Nor ought that's good deny.
3 Who ſhall God's elect ones arraign,
Whom God hath juſtified?

Or who ſhall dare thoſe to condemn,
For whom this Surety dy'd?
4 Chriſt dy'd for us; yea, in his love,
He roſe up for our ſake,
And doth at God's right hand for us
Still interceſſion make.
5 Who from Chriſt's love ſhall us divide?
Shall trouble or diſtreſs?
Shall perſecution or the ſword,
Famine or nakedneſs?
6 Nay, o'er all theſe we triumph ſhall,
With the celeſtial pow'rs;
Thro' Jeſus Chriſt's victorious love,
We're more than conquerors.
7 I am perſuaded, death, nor life,
Nor principalities,
Nor finite pow'rs, nor preſent things,
Nor yet futurities:
8 No height, no depth, no creature ſhall
Diſſolve the twiſted cord
Of mutual love 'twixt God and us,
In Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.
9 Unchangeable is love divine,
Time makes it not decay;
For thoſe whom once the Lord doth love,
He them doth love for ay.
10 From love, great mercies us thou giv'ſt,
But one we'll ſing of ſtill;
Eternal thanks to God for Chriſt,
His Gift unſpeakable.

SONG XXI.

THANKSGIVING *for* GOD'S *free love in and through* CHRIST, *from* Eph. i. 3, &c. Eph. iii. 18. &c.

1 Bleſt be Chriſt's God, and Father dear,
For all our heavenly fare;
In Chriſt he hath enriched us,
With ſp'ritual bleſſings rare.
2 In love he choſe us in his Son,
Before the world he made,

2 Who hath begotten us again
Unto a lively hope,
By Chriſt his riſing from the dead,
Of faith the bleſſed prop.
3 For by it we are well ſecur'd
Of an inheritance,
That's not corrupted nor defil'd,
Nor fades by any chance;
4 Which is for us in heav'n reſerv'd,
And we are kept for it,
By the almighty power of God,
Thro' faith, till we be fit
5 For that ſalvation glorious,
To be reveal'd at laſt,
Of which we wait to be poſſeſt,
When time and days are paſt.
6 In this bleſt hope we do rejoice,
Tho' for a time we need
Here to be kept in heavineſs,
Thro' trials multiplied.
7 Our faith more precious than gold,
By fire is tried here,
That unto praiſe it may be found,
When Jeſus doth appear.
8 This Jeſus, though unſeen, we love,
In him believing ſtill;
Which yields us joy unſpeakable,
That is of glory full.
9 When Jeſus comes, we ſhall receive
The bleſt end of our faith;
Ev'n the ſalvation of our ſouls,
Procur'd us by his death.

SONG XXIV.

The Son *of* God *manifeſted*: From 1 John iii. 1. 2, &c.

1 BEHOLD how matchleſs is that love
The Father hath beſtow'd
On men, that we ſhould be adopt,
And call'd the ſons of God!
2 His image he makes us to bear,
As ſons of heav'nly birth;
This dignity exalts us far
Above the kings on earth.

3 Tho' now the world doth us not know,
As Chriſt it never knew;
Yet God doth own us as his ſons,
We're chang'd and born anew.
4 And what we ſhall hereafter be,
It doth not yet appear;
But this we know, when Chriſt ſhall come,
We ſhall his likeneſs bear:
5 For we ſhall ſee him as he is,
And like him ſhine full bright:
We then come near our glorious Sun,
From whom we have our light.
6 As Chriſt is holy, ſo muſt we,
All who hope for that hour;
Themſelves will alſo purifie,
As he, the Lord, is pure.
7 Let's here, as ſtrangers, follow peace,
And walk with one accord;
And always ſtudy holineſs,
As we would ſee the Lord.
8 No eye hath ſeen, nor ear hath heard,
No heart can things above
Conceive, which Jeſus hath prepar'd
For them who do him love.

SONG XXV.

The glorious TRINITY *adored, and* CHRIST'S LOVE *extolled.*
From Rev. i. 4, 5, *&c.* Rev. iv. 8. *&c.*

1 MAY we have grace and peace from God,
The glorious One in Three,
Who us created and redeem'd,
And us doth ſanctify:
2 Ev'n from the father, who ſtill was,
Who is, and ſtill ſhall be,
And from the ſev'nfold working Sp'rit,
Before his Throne on high;
3 From Jeſus Chriſt, the witneſs true,
And firſt-born from the dead,
Who of all earthly kings and powers
Is Prince and ruling Head;
4 To this great Lord, that ſo lov'd men,
Such loathſome men as we,

As wash us in his precious blood,
Our souls from sin to free.
5 To him, who made us kings and priests,
To God his father high,
Be glory and dominion,
Through all eternity.
6 Behold he comes with flying clouds,
Him ev'ry eye shall see,
And unbelievers who him pierc'd,
Shall wail most bitterly.
7 But let believers lift their heads
With joy, to see and hear,
For then complete redemption
To them is very near.
8 The hosts above their homage pay,
And crowns cast to the ground,
They never cease by night nor day,
These praises to resound:
9 "O holy, holy, holy Lord,
Almighty God alone,
Who ever was, and also is,
And ever is to come!
10 All glory, pow'r, and honour still,
Thou'rt worthy to receive;
All things were made to please thy will,
And by thy pleasure live.
11 Most worthy Lamb, art thou (they sing)
To be adored thus;
Let with thy praise heav'n's mansions ring,
For thou wast slain for us."

SONG XXVI.

The LAMB *that was slain eternally exalted.* From Rev. v.

1 THE heavenly hosts and elders join,
To bow before the Lamb,
With golden harps and sweetest tunes,
They trumpet forth his fame.
2 They cry, "O Father, who shall look
Into thy secret will?
Worthy the Lamb to take the book,
And open ev'ry seal.

3 Thou'rt fit God's myſt'ries to reveal,
For thou waſt ſlain for us,
And thy blood purchas'd us to God,
Which thou ſhed'ſt on the croſs.
4 From ev'ry nation, kind'red, tongue,
Thy precious blood us bought;
Well thou deſerv'ſt our praiſing ſongs,
Who us ſalvation brought.
5 Unto the Lamb that once was ſlain,
Be endleſs praiſes giv'n,
By all that dwell upon the earth,
And all the hoſts of heav'n.
6 Thou haſt us ranſom'd with thy blood,
And ſet us pris'ners free;
Thou mak'ſt us kings and prieſts to God
And we ſhall reign with thee."
7 Let's join, while here, our cheerful ſongs,
With hoſts around the throne,
Ten thouſand thouſands are their tongues,
Yet all agree in one.
8 "Worthy the Lamb that dy'd (they cry)
To be exalted thus,"
"Worthy the Lamb, (let us reply)
For he was ſlain for us.
9 The Lamb is worthy to receive
Strength, wiſdom, riches, might,
Eternal honours we aſcribe
To him, for 'tis his right.
10 Let heav'n and earth unite in one
To praiſe the glorious name
Of him that ſits upon the throne,
And to adore the Lamb."

SONG XXVII.

A view of the SAINTS *and* MARTYRS *in Heaven.*

From Rev. viii.

1 LET's view by faith the ſaints above,
Redeem'd from ſin by Jeſus' love,
Their various tribes, their ſweet employ,
In raptures of eternal joy.

2 The patriarchs, with Jacob's race,
Rais'd up to heav'n by God's free grace!
With ſongs they praiſe their father's God,
Who led them home the heav'nly road.
3 Next, ſee a num'rous multitude,
Redeem'd from hell by Jeſus' blood,
From ev'ry nation, kindred, tongue,
Who ſing an everlaſting ſong.
4 In white robes cloth'd they all do ſtand,
With palms of triumph in their hand:
" Salvation to God on the throne,
(They cry) and to the Lamb his Son."
5 Next theſe, come angels, and fall down,
Humbly adoring Three in One;
" (They cry,) Amen, give glory, pow'r,
And thanks to God for evermore.
6 But whence come theſe in white who ſhine
All cloth'd with righteouſneſs divine?
Theſe come from ſuff'rings great to God,
Their robes they waſh'd in the Lamb's blood.
7 The martyrs trials now are o'er,
They ſee God's face for evermore;
The Lamb makes ſure their heav'nly bleſs;
They've ſaid, He's ours, and we are his.
8 No more the heat ſhall then torment
Of ſcorching ſun they've no complaint;
The Lamb, who ſhines amidſt the throne,
Shall be their everlaſting Sun.
9 To Father, Son and holy Ghoſt,
One God, who ſaved us when loſt,
Be everlaſting glory giv'n,
By all on earth, and all in heaven.

SONG XXVIII.

CHRIST's *Victory and* BABYLON's *Downfall.* From Rev. xviii. *and* Rev. xv. *&c.*

1 BEHOLD, an angel doth deſcend
With power and glory great,
To earth he comes for a good end,
Bleſt tidings to relate?
2 'Great Babylon, that did enthral
'The kingdoms of the earth,

'The time is come for her to fall,
'Which calls for holy mirth,
3 'Let heav'ns be glad, with all the ſaints,
'Let prophets all rejoice;
'God doth avenge your long complaints;
'With praiſe lift up your voice.
4 'A milſtone's caſt by Gabriel,
'And in the ſea is drown'd;
'Thus terribly ſhall Babel fall,
'And never more be found.'
5 Upon the ſea of glaſs they ſtand,
The beaſt who overcome,
With harps of God into their hand,
To celebrate her doom.
6 Theſe conquerors do meet in throngs,
And to Jehovah's name,
They pleaſantly unite the ſongs
Of Moſes and the Lamb.
7 By Moſes hand, the enemy
Did ſink deep in the flood;
So drown'd our ſins are in the ſea
Of Jeſus' precious blood.
8 The conquerors with fluent tongues,
Chriſt's honour will proclaim,
In ſweeter notes than Moſes' ſongs,
They'll tune thoſe of the Lamb.
9 All nations ſhall to thee bow down,
And worſhip rev'rently,
When once thy judgments are made known,
Againſt thine enemy.
10 The hoſts of God with one conſent,
Shall hallelujahs ſing;
When the Lord God omnipotent,
Takes his great pow'r to reign.
11 At length will end the devil's reign,
Over the ſons of men;
Let heav'n and earth rejoice and ſing,
With all that dwell in them.

SONG XXIX.

The GOOD NEWS *of the* RANSOM *of* CHRIST'S BLOOD.

1 GREAT pity God ſhews,
To Gentiles and Jews;
He ſent them his goſpel, to bring them good news;
Good news to the loſt,
With raking fears toſs'd,
That found is a Ranſom in which they may boaſt.
2 A Ranſom of blood,
That runs like a flood,
Their ſins off to carry, who God's law withſtood.
News! that Chriſt was ſo kind,
When hell's pow'rs combin'd,
To rout them, he freely his dear life reſign'd.
3 Blood ſtream'd from his ſide,
T' atone for our pride;
Sin was the tormentor that him crucify'd.
When we have him view'd,
With his blood imbru'd,
May we by this proſpect get all ſin ſubdu'd.
4 What ſight do we ſee?
Chriſt ſtretch'd on the tree,
For rebels as we are, moſt willing to die!
Pains dreadful he felt,
O let our hearts melt
For ſin that did pierce him, when he bore our guilt.
5 Since for ſins of men,
God's dear Lamb was ſlain,
Hard muſt the man's heart be, that yet feels no pain
When the ſun did faint,
And hardeſt rocks rent.
Shall we be ſo ſtubborn, as never relent!
6 Our glorious Head
Our victim was made,
To heal us when wounded, his blood all he ſhed.
In our place he ſtood,
And pour'd out his blood,
Yea, gives us free acceſs to that healing flood.
7 Chriſt's feaſt we'll attend,
And his love commend,

We'll think on his ſuff'rings, till our hearts do rend
His wounds I'll not view,
Like a harden'd Jew,
But when ſet before me, my grief I'll renew.

SONG XXX.

The News of CHRIST's *pierced Feet*: From Iſa. lii. 7.

1 HOW beautiful upon the mount!
Were Chriſt's feet pierc'd on our account,
Where he was crucify'd!
His feet, tho' nailed to the tree,
Swift tidings bring to you and me,
God's wrath is pacify'd.
2 Tidings that Chriſt has purchas'd peace,
With treaſures full of needful grace,
To ſupply all our wants:
Good news! that he hath purchas'd room,
For ev'ry needy ſoul to come,
To ſit and feaſt with ſaints.
3 Were men at God's bar ſtrictly try'd,
None living could be juſtify'd,
All would be guilty found.
From juſtice throne we ſinners fly,
To Chriſt our bleeding Prieſt on high,
Where mercy doth abound.
4 In Chriſt's the proper mercy-ſeat,
Where we with God may humbly treat,
In him God's ſatisfy'd.
His blood hath juſtice reconcil'd,
Its flaming ſword hath quit the field,
Juſtice is on our ſide.
5 Now God his friendlineſs to prove,
Invites us to a feaſt of love,
A rich and coſtly feaſt:
To partake of the rareſt food.
Pardon and peace thro' his Son's blood,
Which angels ne'er did taſte.
6 Lord, ſin the murderer here ſtands,
That pierc'd thy heart, thy feet and hands;
For which I mourn and grieve.

Lord, give a ſtrong courageous faith,
To doom each darling luſt to death,
Sin ſhall no longer live.
7 This foe my Saviour betray'd,
It bound and haul'd him to be try'd,
And rais'd the furious cry,
To crucify the Lord our Head;
But, good news! he roſe from the dead,
And pleads for us on high.

SONG XXXI.

The LAMB's BATTLE *and* VICTORY.

1 THE Lamb fought for me,
My foes vanquiſh'd he;
The lion he conquer'd, when nail'd to the tree.
The Lamb when he fought
Great victory brought;
Our freedom, from bondage to Satan, he wrought.
2 The Lamb for us died,
He was crucify'd;
Yet, when at the loweſt, hell's pow'rs he defy'd.
He lay in the grave,
Our loſt ſouls to ſave;
Yet roſe as our Champion, moſt valiant and brave.
3 He fought and he fell,
Yet overcame hell;
He conquer'd and triumph'd, for ſuch as rebel.
He roſe for our ſake,
And did the earth ſhake;
The devils and keepers to tremble did make.
4 The rocks they did rend;
Him angels attend;
He taught his diſciples, till he did aſcend.
He went up in might,
With chariots of light;
A cloud him received, out of his friends ſight.
5 Above he did land;
Sits on God's right hand,
Our High-Prieſt and Sov'reign, all things to command.

There he pleads on high,
Loud doth his blood cry
For pardon to to ſinners, who to him do fly.
6 The Lamb's Judge of all;
The dead he will call;
All muſt ſtand before him, be they great or ſmall.
His mercy is great;
His blood paid our debt;
He will then abſolve us, when judgment is ſet.
7 Of Chriſt that did die,
But now reigns on high,
Our ſongs, with ſweet muſic, we'll ſpread thro' the ſky.
With both hearts and tongues,
We'll ſing the Lamb's ſongs,
Let ev'ry ſoul join us that to him belongs.

SONG XXXII.

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS, *and his* LOVE *to* BELIEVING SOULS.

1 WHEN Jeſus pour'd out blood and tears,
A ſinking load of wrath he bears,
God's Juſtice to appeaſe.
A bloody robe for us he wore,
His ſoul in pain did travel ſore,
And all to bring us eaſe.
2 The ploughers his dear back did plow,
Their ſcourges here long furrows drew,
In which his blood did run.
They him expos'd to all diſgrace,
They ſpat upon his bleſſed face,
His love this did not ſhun.
3 He bore our curſe and puniſhment,
Shed blood till ev'ry drop was ſpent,
To ranſom us from wrath.
Who can his love enough commend?
That ſaves all criminals condemn'd,
Who look to him by faith?
4 From ſin and wrath thou doſt relieve
The chief of ſinners, who believe;
Thy wounds do them incloſe:

Their ſouls in theſe thy people hide,
And there they conſtantly abide,
Safe from their deadly foes.
5 A ſkreen from wrath, I know of none,
But Jeſus' righteouſneſs alone;
Which covers all our ſin.
Strict trial this can well endure,
For it is infinitely pure,
No flaw is found therein.
6 Thou, when on earth, the ſick didſt heal,
And to the hungry bread didſt deal,
Our ſouls when ſtarving feed:
More precious they are than clay;
Lord Jeſus, pity ſouls this day,
And ſatisfy our need.
7 Believers are by thee belov'd;
A kingdom, ne'er to be remov'd,
Shall unto them be giv'n.
Rich crowns on them thou wilt beſtow,
No matter what they want below,
They'll be made up in heav'n.

SONG XXXIII.

CHRIST'S *great* SUFFERINGS *bring great* BENEFIT *to us.*

1 THE Lamb ſilent ſtood,
While men ſhed his blood!
Himſelf he gave freely, to be our ſouls food.
Crown'd was he with thorn,
Us'd with ſpite and ſcorn,
Yet patiently bore it, to ſave the forlorn,
2 Expoſed he ſtands,
With nail'd feet and hands,
Deep pierced, long bleeding, to pay law's demands;
No man's tongue can tell
What grief him befell,
In ſaving loſt ſinners from ſinking to hell.
3 He was doom'd to die
On mount Calvary,
Sore preſs'd he did utter his laſt bitter cry:

Our guilt which he bore
Squeez'd blood from each pore;
Great was his ſoul's torture, that made him to roar.
4 His wounds bring us peace
His pains give us eaſe,
From ſin's pow'r and bondage they do us releaſe.
Chriſt ſtraying ſouls ſought
Their pardon he bought,
From Satan's vile ſlav'ry their freedom he wrought.
5 Lord, thy love's divine,
It doth kindle mine;
O let it cauſe in me all graces to ſhine,
Dead ſouls to revive,
When they life derive
From thy wounds, the fountain that makes men alive.
6 I'm ſinful and vile,
My heart's full of guile,
It will be free mercy if on me thou ſmile.
Lord, do not deſpiſe
My ſoul's feeble cries,
Receive a loſt ſinner that to thy blood flies.
7 This blood ſaves from hell,
And fears doth diſpel,
The thunders of Sinai the Lamb's blood doth quell.
I plead thy free grace,
One ſmile of thy face,
Or word to me ſpoken, would fill me with peace.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX:

CONTAINING,

I. A LECTURE on 1 *Cor.* xi. 17. to the End.
II. A PREPARATION SERMON from *Joſ.* iii. 5.
III. An ACTION SERMON from *Cant.* iii. 4.

A LECTURE on 1 *Cor.* xi. 17. to the end, concerning the Inſtitution of the LORD's SUPPER.

Verſe 17. *Now in this that I declare unto you, I praiſe you not, that you come together, not for the better, but for the worſe.*

18. *For firſt of all, when we come together in the church, I hear that there be diviſions among you; and I partly believe it.*

19. *For there muſt be alſo hereſies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt among you.*

IN this paſſage, the apoſtle takes occaſion to reprove the great diſorders and abuſes crept in among them in adminiſtrating and partaking of the Lord's ſupper, which (as the ancients tell us) was commonly adminiſtrated with a love-feaſt annexed to it, which gave occaſion to the ſcandalous diſorders here reprehended.

Verſe 17. We have the manner of his introducing the charge, "Now in this that I declare unto you, I praiſe you not, &c." Which ſhews his willingneſs to commend them ſo far as he could. But ſuch ſcandalous diſorders as they were guilty of in ſo ſacred an inſtitution, he could not paſs without a ſharp reproof. Why? they inverted the very end and deſign of the ordinance, which was intended to make them better, or to promote their ſpiritual intereſt, but it really made them worſe. Wherefore he ſays, "they came together not for the better, but for the worſe."

Obſerve 1. That Chriſt's ordinances, if they do not make us better, they are apt to make us worſe. If they do

us no good, they may do us harm; if they do not meſt and mend, they will harden; and that corruptions will be confirmed in us, if the proper means do not work a cure of them. 3. It concerns us all to enquire into the ſucceſs of ordinances and ſolemn meetings. O 'tis ſad, if our meetings tend to increaſe our ſin, inſtead of the increaſe of our grace. Let us earneſtly deprecate this.

Verſe 18. "For firſt of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear there be diviſions among you," &c. They fell into diviſions, ſects, parties, and factions, in their celebrating of this ordinance; they fell a quarrelling with one another about meats and drinks in the love-feaſts, or about the order of their down-ſitting, or the time when they ſhould begin, or did not ſtay till they all came up. The whole church did not join together, but they eat it ſeparately; there was alſo uncharitableneſs, alienation of affections, diſcord and contentions among them, which very much marred their edification, and ſucceſs of the goſpel.

Queſt. Seeing ſchiſms are mentioned here, what is meant thereby? Who are guilty of ſchiſm, and who are ſchiſmatics? *Anſw.* In Scripture the word is variouſly taken: 1. 'Tis taken for a difference in opinions and ſentiments about ſome points, when there is no heat of contention, or breach of communion. Such a diviſion or ſchiſm was among the Phariſees, about Chriſt's curing the blind man, John ix. 16. 'tis ſaid, "there was a diviſion among them," originally *chisma*. And ſuch ſchiſms may be among orthodox divines about leſſer points, and yet managed without giving offence. 2. The general ſenſe of the word, is a dividing and breaking off from the communion of the Church in public ordinances, without cauſe, like theſe, Heb. x. 25. "Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is." And in this ſenſe, the ancients took ſchiſm as diſtinguiſhed from hereſy. Auguſtine ſaith, *Schiſmaticos facit non diverſa fides, ſed communionis, diſrupta ſocietas.* 3. In this place, and commonly in other places of Scripture, as 1 Cor. i. 10. 1 Cor. iii. 4. 1 Cor. xii. 25. the word *chisma* is taken for uncharitable, contentious, and diviſive practices among the profeſſors of the goſpel, without breaking off from the communion of the church; when people are chargeable with uncharitable contentions and diſcords,

diſcords, and alienation of affections from their brethern; for here they came together, and yet were ſchiſmatics.

Obſerve. There may be ſchiſm, where there is no ſeparation of communion. Perſons may attend ordinances together, and ſit together at the Lord's table, and yet be ſchiſmatics in ſcripture ſenſe, by reaſon of their uncharitable contentions, and alienation of affections: Whereas Chriſtians may ſeparate from each other's communion, and yet be charitable to one another; and this is not ſo much ſchiſm in Scripture ſenſe, as to be uncharitable and contentious.

The apoſtle had had a report of theſe diviſions, which he did the more eaſily believe, becauſe he knew there behoved not only to be diviſions but hereſies alſo, that is, falſe doctrines, more dangerous than ſchiſms; for hereſies are corrupt opinions, which ſtrike at the fundamentals of Chriſtianity and all ſound religion. Hereſy, according to the modern ſenſe of the word, is an error in the fundamentals of religion maintained with obſtinacy; though we cannot ſay the word neceſſarily imports ſuch a ſtrong ſenſe in this place, hereſy and ſchiſm ſometimes being ſynonymous terms.

Obſerve 1. We have no cauſe to wonder that there ſhould be breaches of Chriſtian love in the Church, when we know ſuch offences will come as ſhall make ſhipwreck of faith and good conſcience.

Queſt. How ſays the apoſtle, "Hereſies muſt come?" What neceſſity is there for them? *Anſ.* There is no neceſſity of force upon any man to broach them, any further than his own corruption, pride, vain-glory, envy, or contentious ſpirit, or Satan's temptations, prompt him to it. But the event is certain, becauſe of God's decree permitting them, who by his wiſdom orders them for wiſe ends, that they "who are approved may be made manifeſt," by their conſtant adhering to the truth againſt all theſe temptations of ſeducers.

Obſerve 2. A time of temptation and ſeduction is a time of trial and diſcovery, who are ſincere and conſtant adherers to the truths and ways of God, and who not.

Obſerve 3. It is a pleaſure to God to ſee the faith and conſtancy of his upright ones diſcovered to the world.

Obſerve 4. The wiſdom of God can make the errors and wickedneſs of others a foil to the piety and integrity of the ſaints.

Verſe 20. "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's ſupper."

21. "For in eating every one taketh before other his own ſupper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken."

The heathens uſed to eat and drink plentifully at their feaſts upon their ſacrifices; and this profane cuſtom was creeping in among the wealthier Corinthians. Many think the apoſtle was pointing here at their *agapæ*, or love-feaſts, that in thoſe times either preceded or followed the Lord's ſupper; and they are called love-feaſts, becauſe they were deſigned to manifeſt their love to their fellow Chriſtians, both poor and rich, and the poor carried away what was left at them: And alſo they had them to repreſent our Lord's laſt ſupper, in which he eat the Paſchal Lamb, before he inſtituted that ordinance now called the *Lord's ſupper*. Theſe love-feaſts were founded on no command of Chriſt, but came in by cuſtom, and by the Jews who became Chriſtians. Theſe would needs have an appendix or appurtenance of the Lord's ſupper; and, in imitation of Chriſt's eating the Paſchal Lamb before the Lord's ſupper, would have a feaſt or ſupper of their own to precede the Lord's ſupper; and having provided it at home, would needs bring it to the place where the Church met. To this feaſt all the poor were invited at the charges of the rich, as an expreſſion of their perfect love and charity one towards another. But in this Church great abuſes crept in, in this practice: the poor Chriſtians were neglected and deſpiſed. The rich did either not invite them, or did not wait for them: But the rich haſted to eat what they had brought with them, and ſome of them eat and drank to exceſs, ſo that "one was hungry, another was drunken." The apoſtle inveighs againſt this practice, as turning a feaſt of charity into a debauch, and as that which made them incapable to partake of the Lord's ſupper. This was a ſcandalous irregularity, a profaning a ſacred inſtitution, and corrupting a divine ordinance to the laſt degree. What ſhould have been a bond of mutual amity and affection, was made an inſtrument of diſcord and diſunion.

Obſerve 1. Duties not done as they ought, are not done at all in Chriſt's account. Or a careleſs eating and drinking of the Lord's ſupper is as good as none, yea worſe than not eating. So prayers may be made, yet not made; ſacraments received, yet not received; alms given,

yet

yet not given, becauſe not done in the form and manner required by God.

Obſerve 2. A ſincere ſoul muſt and will look not only to the matter of the duty, but alſo to the manner of performing it.

Obſerve 3. It is a heinous evil for Chriſtians to treat their fellow Chriſtians with contempt and inſolence, eſpecially at the Lord's table: For the rich to deſpiſe the poor, this is a great evil.

Obſerve 4. That even in the apoſtolical and primitive times, great diſorders and irregularities had crept into the Church; and that there is no Church without ſpot in this imperfect ſtate.

Obſerve 5. That the apoſtle, notwithſtanding of theſe, doth not direct the one part of the Corinthians to ſeparate from the other; but he only reproves and rectifies their abuſes. He doth not ſay, Withdraw from ſuch perſons, for they will pollute the ordinance to you. No, if they be polluted, it is themſelves, and not to others. He eats and drinks damnation "to himſelf." Every man ſhall bear his own burden. Wherefore, ſays he, "Let a man examine himſelf," not his neighbour. The apoſtle doth not encourage ſeparation upon that ground, that there were ſcandalous perſons admitted in Corinth, even ſome drunk about the time of partaking, which might be the occaſion of their divided way of communicating. But he reproves their divided communicating, and charges them to come together to the Lord's ſupper, and tarry for one another, He indeed ſharply reproves their ſcandalous practice, and tells them that it was moſt hazardful to themſelves to communicate unworthily, but ſpeaks of no danger to others. He commands them to examine themſelves, and ſo to eat, but not to examine their fellow-communicants, which certainly he had done, if their joining with them had made them partakers of their ſin and danger.

Verſe 22. "What, have ye not houſes to eat and to drink in? or deſpiſe ye the church of God, and ſhame them that have not? What ſhall I ſay to you? ſhall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe you not."

The apoſtle here doth condemn both the abuſes of thoſe feaſts, and alſo their keeping them in the place where the church met: Some underſtand the church, of the houſe where the church met, and call their feaſting there a profaning

ſaning or unhallowing the place ſet apart for divine worſhip. Others underſtand it of the people or poor members there met. Why do ye deſpiſe them? by excluding them from your company, becauſe of their poverty; and ſo ye put them to ſhame, whom God has adopted, and admitted into his family. This feaſt was originally deſigned for the poor's relief, and ye exclude them from it.

Obſ. 1. The deſpiſing of the poor members of the church, is a deſpiſing of the church itſelf, yea, Chriſt, the Head of the Church, as he that pincheth the little toe, paineth the whole body, and the head too.

Obſ. 2. With what lenity and mildneſs the apoſtle reproves theſe great diſorders, *Shall I praiſe you?* It was the firſt time he had told them of their faults, in hopes of amendment, and therefore doth it gently; and ſome think this gentle way of reproof had the due effect, becauſe no fault is taxed in the ſecond epiſtle that was reproved in the firſt.

Verſe 23. "For I have received of the Lord that which I alſo delivered unto you, that the Lord Jeſus, the ſame night in which he was betrayed, took bread,

24. "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me.

25. "After the ſame manner alſo he took the cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying, this cup is the New Teſtament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come."

After reproving their diſorders, he reduces them to the primitive inſtitution, and tells them how he came by the knowledge of it, ſeeing he was not among the apoſtles at the firſt inſtitution. It was by revelation from Chriſt: and what he had received of the Lord, he communicated to them, without varying from the truth in the leaſt, without adding or diminiſhing. As if he had ſaid, "As for theſe love-feaſts preceding the Lord's ſupper, *I received nothing from the Lord;* you have borrowed them from Jews or Heathens: But all that I received from the Lord concerning the Lord's ſupper, I here ſet before you." And indeed he gives a more particular account of the inſtitution than we meet with elſewhere.

1. We have the Author of it, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſ

Obſ. It is an act of Chriſt's royal power and authority, as King and Head of the Church, to inſtitute ſacraments. The church had no power to appoint ſuch, but only to execute and adminiſter what Chriſt appoints: And as it is Chriſt's ordinance, we ſhould have a ſpecial regard to it, and not profane or neglect it.

2. We have the time of the inſtitution, *The ſame night in which he was betrayed*; when he was entering on his ſoul-ſufferings in the garden, and going next day to the croſs; a night much to be remembered, being the laſt night before Chriſt's death: The night wherein he began his bitter agonies, and ſwate the bloody ſweat for us; a night wherein he ſaw heaven, earth, and hell, even juſtice, men, and devils, drawn up in battle-array againſt him. A wondrous inſtance of his love, in ſpending ſo much of that little time had in the world (when he ſeemed to have more need to mind himſelf) in ſettling an ordinance for the confirmation and conſolation of his people, to the end of the world. Whatever comes of himſelf, his people muſt not be forgot.—Obſerve from the time of the inſtitution, the night before his ſuffering, that it is very neceſſary, when ſufferings are approaching, to have recourſe to the Lord's table, which affords both an antidote againſt fear, and a reſtorative and cordial to faith. Wherefore Chriſt, for our example, communicated with his diſciples the night before he ſuffered.

3. We have the ſacramental elements, or the memorative, ſignificative, and inſtructive ſigns, bread and wine.

4. The things ſignified thereby, the body and blood of Chriſt, his body broke and blood ſhed, together with all the benefits which flow from his death and ſacrifice.

Obſerv. 1. There is no tranſubſtantiation as the Papiſts abſurdly imagine. Why? Paul calls that which is eaten *bread*, five times over in this paſſage: and even after what the Papiſts call conſecration. A plain argument that the apoſtle knew nothing of their monſtrous doctrine, which makes the bread, by the words of conſecration, to be changed into the ſubſtance of Chriſt's body, only the accidents of bread remaining; which affronts and deſtroys the nature of a ſacrament, and gives the lie to our ſenſes. It is called his body, becauſe it was a ſign and repreſentation of it, not his real body to be ſure; for then it would follow that Chriſt eat his own body while alive, and that his diſciples did the ſame; yea that they devoured that body

miſſion of ſins;" it is a figurative ſpeech, ſignifying that the wine in the cup, as repreſenting the ſhedding of Chriſt's blood, is a ſign and ſeal of Chriſt's Teſtament or Covenant of Grace, confirmed by his blood.—From which we may obſerve, 1. That every worthy communicant doth here get a copy of Chriſt's Teſtament put into his hands, with all the legacies and bleſſings it contains, ſuch as pardon of ſin, peace with God, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, redemption, grace, and glory. Which Teſtament, if we take hold of, and acquieſce in the method of ſalvation contained in it, and can prove our relation to the Teſtator by faith and and regeneration, we are children and heirs, and have an intereſt therein.—Obſ. 2, What it was that purchaſed the New Teſtament to us, even Chriſt's blood; there is never a time we read or hear of the New Teſtament, but we ſhould mind the blood of Chriſt. Had it not been for the blood of Chriſt, we had never had the New Teſtament written, and had it not been for the New Teſtament, we had never known the meaning of Chriſt's blood ſhed.

6. We have the ends of the inſtitution, 1. To keep up the "remembrance of Chriſt." Chriſt knew how apt our baſe hearts would be to forget him amidſt a throng of ſenſible objects as we here converſe with; and how much our forgetfulneſs of Chriſt would be to our prejudice and diſadvantage; and therefore he appoints this ordinance, to bring Chriſt, his death and love, to our believing, affectionate, and thankful remembrance. 2. "To ſhew forth his death," *i. e.* to declare, publiſh, and proclaim it. It is not barely, in remembrance of Chriſt, of what he hath done and ſuffered, but alſo to celebrate, publiſh, and proclaim his gracious condeſcenſion, his love and favour to loſt ſinners. We declare his death to be our life, and the ſpring of all our comforts and hopes. We glory in this atonement and ſacrifice, and ſpread it before God as our only ranſom. We ſet it in the view of our faith for our quickening and comfort. We own it before the world, as the only ground of our hope; and that we are the diſciples of a crucified Chriſt, who truſt in him alone for ſalvation and acceptance with God.

7. We have a mandate or charge given for the celebration of this ordinance, and for doing it frequently. Our Lord's command is twice repeated for ſecurity, "This do; this do ye." It was our Lord's will that we ſhould celebrate

celebrate the memorial of his death and paſſion. It is the will of our ſovereign Lord and Lawgiver, the expreſs command of a Saviour, yea, of a dying Saviour. A command of love; and it is ſuch a command as, if we duly obſerve it, will be a bleſſed means to enable us to obſerve all the commands of God the better. It is ſuch a command, as whoſoever lives in the wilful neglect of it, cannot be called a Chriſtian, but will be treated by Chriſt at the great day as an enemy, and deſpiſer of his dying love. Wherefore it is our duty not only to communicate and partake of this ordinance, but we muſt do it often. We cannot maintain bodily health and ſtrength without frequent meals, ſo neither can we maintain ſoul health and ſtrength without this ſpiritual diet frequently taken and received. The ancient churches celebrated this ordinance every Lord's day. Let us be thankful that we have this ſpiritual meal more frequently tendered to us than formerly. O for ſharpened appetites for our food!

8. We have the perpetuity of the ordinance. It is to be celebrated till the Lord come the ſecond time, without ſin, for the ſalvation of them that believe, and to judge the world. Obſer. 1. That the Lord's ſupper is not a temporary, but a ſtanding and perpetual ordinance. 2. That there is no need of ſacraments in heaven; for Chriſt is there bodily preſent. Faith is then changed into viſion, and hope into fruition. Here we hold communion with him by ſigns and ſymbols: but above, we will ſee him as he is, and enjoy him perfectly. The day will then break, and all the ſhadows will flee away.

Verſe 27. "Wherefore, whoſoever ſhall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

28. "But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

29. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body."

The apoſtle having declared the original inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper; he comes now to inſtruct the Corinthians in the right uſe of it, and to beware of profaning and abuſing this ordinance, as they had done.

Obſerve 1. The ſin which he warns them of; viz. "Eating and drinking unworthily." *Queſt.* What is this? *Anſ.* It is not a weak faith, or weakneſs in know-

ledge, or want of perfect holineſs, or freedom from ſin, that will denominate a perſon an unworthy receiver; for this ordinance was not inſtituted for angels, but for men who are imperfect and ſinful: But it is to come ignorant, without due preparation, without faith, without repentance, ſelf-examination; without reſolution againſt ſin, and without reconciliation to God, or to our neighbour.

Obſerve 2. The guilt and heinouſneſs of this ſin; they are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, *i. e.* It is an acceſſion to the guilt of ſhedding the innocent blood of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.—It is an implicit approbation of the Jews act in crucifying Chriſt.—It is a trampling Chriſt's blood under our feet.—It is a crucifying Chriſt afreſh, and harbouring the traitors and enemies of Chriſt in our boſom.

Obſerve 3. The danger of it, eating and drinking damnation to ourſelves; *i. e.* They provoke God to inflict ſore judgments on them, temporal and ſpiritual judgments here, and eternal judgments hereafter.—The meaning is not, that this ſin is unpardonable, but that it deſerves damnation, and will bring it on, without repentance, and flying to the blood of Chriſt for cleanſing. Every ſin is in its own nature damning, and therefore ſuch a heinous ſin, as profaning this holy ordinance, muſt ſurely be ſo. But timorous and fearful believers ſhould not be diſcouraged from attending this holy ordinance by the ſound of this word, as if they bound upon themſelves the ſentence of damnation, by coming to the Lord's table unprepared. For hearing and praying unworthily incurs damnation, as well as communicating unworthily. But this ſin, as well as others, leaves room for forgiveneſs upon repentance.

Obſerve 4. That unworthy receivers of the Lord's ſupper do contract great guilt, and incur great danger to themſelves. And therefore they ſhould be much concerned to guard againſt this heinous and dangerous ſin; and cry with the Pſalmiſt, "Lord, deliver us from bloodguiltineſs."

Obſerve 5. It is only judgment to himſelf, it is not to another that receives with him. For if a wicked man's preſence at the ſacrament ſhould pollute the ordinance to a worthy receiver, then Chriſt and his eleven apoſtles were defiled by the company of Judas at the paſſover, at which he certainly was, and, as many think, at the Lord's ſupper alſo. Which is abſurd.

We

We have in verſe 26th, the duty required for preventing the ſin and danger of unworthy communicating, and that is the great and neceſſary duty of ſelf-examination, It is a metaphor taken from goldſmiths, who try the truth of their gold by the touchſtone, the purity of their gold by the fire, and the weight of it by the ſcale. We have here, 1. The perſon examining, "Let a man examine." 2. The perſon examined, it is *himſelf;* he is to call himſelf to the bar of conſcience, and put queſtions to himſelf, 1. Concerning his ſtate, whether he has a right to come or not. 2. His ſins and ſhortcomings. 3. His wants and neceſſities. 4. His ends and deſigns; whether it be to obey the charge of his dying Saviour, to ſhew forth his death, renew and ſeal his covenant with God, get nearneſs and communion with him, nouriſhment to his ſoul, and to ſupply his wants. And, 5. Concerning his graces and qualifications, particularly as to knowledge, faith, repentance, fear, love, thankfulneſs, holy deſires, and new obedience.

Obſerve 1. It is not enough that a miniſter examine us before partaking. We muſt examine ourſelves, for we only can try our own hearts and thoughts, which a miniſter cannot.

Obſerve 2. Our main concern before partaking is about ourſelves —It is not about examining others, but about examining ourſelves that we are to be employed. It is not what he or ſhe is that is to communicate with us; but what I am myſelf.

Obſerve 3. It ſhould therefore be our ſingular care, before communicating, to examine ourſelves, and commune with our own hearts, as to our right to, and fitneſs for the Lord's table.

We have in verſe 29th, the true cauſe of unworthy communicating, "Not diſcerning the Lord's body;" *i. e.* not making a diſtinction between this bread and common bread; betwixt the Lord's body and the body of a mere man;—not prizing nor eſteeming the body of a crucified Jeſus, as the meritorious ground of our juſtification.

Verſe 30. "For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.

Some were puniſhed with ſickneſs and weakneſs, and ſome with death, for their irreverence in approaching to the Lord's table.

Obſerve 1. That careleſs and irreverent partaking brings on temporal judgments, as well as ſpiritual and eternal.

Obſer. 2. That God may puniſh his own people with temporal judgments: For ſeverals of thoſe ſo puniſhed were in a ſtate of favour with God, as appears from the word *ſleep*, the death of the wicked being hardly called ſleep in any place of ſcripture; and from verſe 32. they were *chaſtened of the Lord, that* they might *not be condemned with the world.* Now, divine chaſtening is a ſign of divine love.

Obſer. 3. That the holineſs of an ordinance, or the habitual holineſs of a perſon will not exempt him from God's diſpleaſure and the infliction of temporal judgments here in this life, if he do not by actual preparations ſanctify the name of God in the duty and ordinances of his worſhip.

Obſer. 4. That God puniſhes his people now to prevent their eternal woe.

Verſe 31. "For if we would judge ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged."

If we would examine, try, cenſure, and ſentence ourſelves, and ſo come to the Lord's table, we would eſcape the caſtigatory puniſhment, and condemnatory ſentence of God. Obſer. 1. That as it is our duty often to examine and judge ourſelves, ſo ſelf-judging will preſerve us from the condemnation and judgment of God. 2. That theſe who through weakneſs of underſtanding are not capable to examine themſelves, are by no means fit to partake of this ordinance.

Verſe 32. "But when we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world."

The nature of theſe judgments, or afflictive evils, which do befal the children of God in this life, they are chaſtenings, "we are chaſtened of the Lord." To be chaſtened has a double aſpect, firſt upon our privilege, it denotes our relation, as children to God our Father. Chaſtenings are a part of his childrens portion; yet in that we are chaſtened, it taxes us with weakneſs; we are fooliſh and unruly, and therefore ſo long as we are here, muſt always go with a rod at our back. Chriſt, who was alſo a Son, was chaſtened, "The chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him;" but his were judiciary chaſtiſements, not as a child,

child, but as an enemy, a malefactor, in our ſtead. Obſerve, The merciful deſign of God in chaſtening his children, is to prevent their condemnation. When therefore at any time we are under chaſtiſement, let us juſtify God, and condemn ourſelves, ſeeing his chaſtiſements are deſigned to prevent our condemnation.

Verſes 33. 34. "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home: that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the reſt will I ſet in order when I come.

The apoſtle cloſes all with a caution to beware of the irregularities they had been guilty of, and to rectify them, that they come not together to condemnation. Obſ. 1. That our holy duties through our own abuſe may prove matter of condemnation. Chriſtians may keep ſabbaths, hear ſermons, perform prayers, attend ſacraments, and only aggravate their guilt, and bring on a heavier doom on themſelves. Obſ. 2. We have great need to ſee that we come to God in due order.

Laſtly, He tells them, that as to the other points of church order, he would determine them when he came among them: "The reſt will I ſet in order when I come." Such unchriſtian diſorders may ariſe in the church, as will require the preſence and coming of an apoſtle to correct and reform them.

A PREPARATION

A PREPARATION SERMON

BEFORE THE SACRAMENT.

Joſhua iii. 5. *Sanctify yourſelves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.*

IN this chapter we have the hiſtory of Iſrael's paſſing through Jordan to Canaan; and a very memorable hiſtory it is; for long after they are bid to remember what God did for them between Shittim and Gilgal, Micah vi. 5. "that they may know the righteouſneſs of the Lord." Shittim was the place where they decamped, and Gilgal where they next pitched. See Joſhua iii. 1. compared with Joſhua iv. 19. He orders them to march up to the river ſide, where they came and lodged, though they were unprovided of means to paſs in the ordinary way. Though they had neither boats nor bridges, yet they go forward in faith, truſting God's power and promiſe. It was told them, Joſhua i. 11. that they ſhould paſs it. We muſt go in the way of our duty, though we foreſee difficulties, truſting God to help us through them when we come to them. The people are directed to follow the ark, verſe 3. when borne by the prieſts and Levites, to teach us cloſely to attend ordinances, if we would have the marks of God's favour and ſpecial preſence.

In the text we have two things, 1. A command. 2. Reaſons given for it.

As to the firſt, "Sanctify yourſelves." The word *ſanctify* has divers acceptations in ſcripture. Sometimes it is applied to God, we are commanded to *ſanctify the Lord*, i. e. to think and ſpeak reverently of him, or humbly to worſhip him. At other times we are commanded to *ſanctify ourſelves*, and then it imports ſeveral things; 1. Our ſeparating or ſetting ourſelves apart to ſome holy uſe. 2. Our cleanſing ourſelves from all ceremonial pollution. Our preparing ourſelves for ſome ſolemn or ſacred action, by the uſe of ſome ſacred rites or ceremonies, ſuch as legal waſhing, &c. 4. Our putting ourſelves in a ſuitable frame for attending on God's worſhip

ſhip. 5. Our purifying ourſelves inwardly from ſin, and adorning ourſelves with holineſs. I might cite ſcripture for all the ſignifications of the word, as Exod. xix. 22. Joſh. vii. 13. 1 Chron. xv. 12. 2 Chron. v. 11. xxix. 5. xxx. 3. &c. I ſhall take it here as comprehending ſomething of all theſe ſenſes, eſpecially the people's preparing themſelves to attend the ark, and the diſcovering of God's power, glory, and goodneſs, with a ſuitable ſorrow and awful frame of ſpirit, befitting ſuch a great occaſion.

II. We have the reaſons for it, "For to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you." See how magnificently he ſpeaks of God's works, he calls them wonder; and indeed theſe were ſo; the dividing of the waters of Jordan, and making them to ſtand upon a heap and then to run back, turning fluids into ſolids, and cauſing the Iſraelites to walk through the rapid river upon ſolid dry ground. All theſe were great wonders of God's power and goodneſs towards Iſrael. Now, ſays Joſhua, ſince God is about to give you ſuch uncommon inſtances of his power and favour, ſanctify yourſelves, compoſe your minds by meditation, prayer, and abſtractedneſs from the world, that ye may be in caſe for a careful and religious obſervation of his wonderful works, and to receive the diſcovery of his glory, and the communications of his goodneſs, that ſo ye may give God all the glory, and take to yourſelves the comfort of his wondrous works and gracious appearances.

Doctrine. When God is about to make wonderful diſcoveries of his glory and goodneſs to his people, then they ſhould make ſolemn preparation for obſerving and receiving of the ſame. For confirmation thereof, ſee Exod. xix. 10. 11. "And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Go unto the people, and ſanctify them to day and to-morrow, and let them waſh their cloths; and be ready againſt the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the ſight of all the people, upon mount Sinai." Or, 2*dly*, When God ſets tryſt with a people, they ſhould prepare themſelves to attend him, 1 Sam. xvi. 4. 5. "And Samuel did that which the Lord ſpake, and came to Bethlehem; and the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and ſaid, comeſt thou peaceably? And he ſaid, peaceably: I am come to ſa-

crifice unto the Lord; ſanctify yourſelves, and come with me to the ſacrifice.

Method I. When it is that the Lord makes ſuch wonderful diſcoveries of himſelf to his people.

II. Wherein the preparation for waiting on this wonder working God doth ly.

III. The properties of this preparation.

IV. The neceſſity of it.

V. And laſtly, I ſhall make application.

1. As to the firſt head, When it is that the Lord makes glorious and wondrous diſcoveries of himſelf to a people. 1. When, notwithſtanding of grievous ſins and provocations, he averts threatened and impending judgments, and comes to them in a way of mercy; as, when he threatens famine and ſcarcity, he ſends fruitful ſeaſons and pleaty of bread; when he threatens the noiſome peſtilence, he removes it and ſends health: when he threatens a bloody ſword, he ſheaths it up, and ſends peace and ſafety.

2. When he is pleaſed to quell the church's enemies and perſecutors, to deliver his people from their oppreſſions, and give them the freedom of their aſſemblies, and of obſerving God's inſtitutions in purity.

3. When he pours out a ſpirit of reformation on all ranks and degrees, ſo that people generally turn to the Lord, prize ordinances, prayer, family-worſhip, and appear againſt vice.

4. When God pours out his Spirit on the aſſemblies of his people, ſo that the preaching of the goſpel is attended with life, power and ſucceſs, to the melting of hearts, and converting of ſouls.

5. When he diſcovers a Redeemer to a loſt ſinking ſoul; when a poor ſelf-condemned ſinner, that was at his wit's end, gets a ſight of the poſſibility of ſalvation through the ſatisfaction of Chriſt.

6. When he ſets forth Chriſt crucified before our eyes in the ſacrament; when he diſplays therein the wiſdom, juſtice, love and goodneſs of God to ſinners, in a moſt lively manner.

7. When he returns and makes his people's ſky-break after a long night of deſertion; when he makes light to ariſe and ſhine to them that were in darkneſs, and opens the door of his preſence-chamber.

8. When he gives them the victory over ſatan's temptations

tations and aſſaults after long-ſufferings and conflicts, and ſpeaks to them as to Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 9. " My grace is ſufficient for thee; for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs."

9. When he meets with them in ordinances, looſes their bonds, frees them from their ſtraitenings in duty, and enlarges their hearts in prayer, and enables them to pour forth their complaints and requeſts before the Lord.

10. When he comes with a return to their prayers; particularly, 1. By lifting on them the light of his countenance; or, 2. By giving them a view of their covenant-relation to God; a well-grounded hope of heaven; and new ſtrength to grapple with ſin, perform duties, and bear trials.

11. When he comes and gives a glorious diſcovery of his greatneſs and majeſty, ſo as to fill them with awful fear and reverence of God, and makes them cry, " Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" O the unſpeakable diſtance that is between God and us! God is glorious, and the creature is nothing.

12. When he comes and gives the ſoul a glorious diſcovery of the holineſs and purity of God, in his nature, his law and his works, as he did to Job, making him cry, *Behold I am vile*: and to Iſaiah, *Wo is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a man of unclean lips.*

13. When he gives a glorious diſcovery of the goodneſs and mercy of God, particularly in theſe inſtances. 1. The glorious contrivance of our redemption, by ſending Chriſt to ſave us. 2. In pardoning guilty ſinners ſo many crimes, and making them cry, as Micah vii. 18. " Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy." 3. In taking rebellious traitors and enemies to God to be children of God, and favourites of heaven. 4. In exalting them above angels that never ſinned, and providing glorious manſions for them.

14. When he comes in the ordinances, and quickens the dead and languiſhing graces of his people; as, 1. When he melts their hard hearts into the exerciſe of repentance and mourning for ſin. 2. When he comes and actuates their faith, enables the weak ſinner to go out to Chriſt, caſt his ſoul and lay his burden on him, and wholly to look to him, and lean on him for pardon and

salvation. 3. When he comes and makes their hearts burn with love to himself, and to precious Christ the Mediator, while he talks to them, and opens up the scriptures. 4. When he draws out the desires and pantings of the soul towards himself. 5. When he quickens the spirit of prayer, and elevates the heart for praise, and enables the soul for every duty.

II. As to the second head, Wherein this preparation and sanctifying of the heart for waiting on God in ordinances doth lie: *First*, It supposes, 1. That we are naturally unfit and unprepared for approaching to God. 2. It supposes a work of God's grace and Spirit on the heart: he only fits the soul for spiritual things. "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord," Prov. xvi. 1.

Secondly, It directly impors these things: 1. The soul's being in a gracious state, translated from nature to grace by the Spirit of God, and that the soul is reconciled to God by the blood of Christ, and a work of sanctification begun; without this we cannot be accepted.

2. It lies in bringing our hearts with us, and engaging all the powers and faculties of our souls to attend God in duty, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. "Unite my heart to fear thy name;" and, Psal. cxix. 10. "With my whole heart have I sought thee."

3. It lies in our having right thoughts and uptakings of that gracious God whom we approach to; 1. That we believe that God is, and is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. 2. That he is incomprehensibly great and glorious, fills the heavens and the earth with his presence, and that great fear and reverence is due to him. 3. That he is glorious in holiness, and of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity. 4. That he is spotless in justice, and will by no means clear the guilty. 5. That he is omnipotent in power, for protecting his people, and destroying his enemies. 6. That he is matchless in clemency and mercy, easy to be intreated, and ready to forgive through Christ. 7. That he is faithful, and keeps covenant for ever.

4. It lies in having humble and low thoughts of ourselves, as unworthy to approach to God, or receive any token of his favour. The soul that is sanctified and prepared for approaching to God, hath a deep sense of former

mer ſins and miſcarriages, wonders at God's patience, that the earth has not opened its mouth to ſwallow it up ere now.

5. It lies in cleanſing and purifying ourſelves, by ſearching for and throwing out all theſe ſins and evils that unfit us for converſe with God. If we would have God to accept us, we muſt regard no iniquity in our hearts; particularly, 1. We muſt caſt out pride and ſelf-conceit. If we have a good opinion of ourſelves, our duties and performances, God will not accept us; we muſt count all but loſs and dung for Chriſt 2. Worldlineſs, and thoughts about earthly things. 3. Unbelief and doubtings concerning the truths of God. 4. Malice and revenge. 5 Vain and wandering thoughts, and ſeek to have our hearts fixed, Pſ. lvi.

6. It lies in our retiredneſs and abſtractedneſs from the world and earthly thoughts. In the temple, for as much fleſh as was uſed there for the ſacrifice, not one fly was ſeen ſtirring; which teacheth us to drive away the flies of wordly thoughts in God's preſence, that they do not ſpoil nor corrupt the ſacrifice, as that grievous ſwarm of flies did every thing in the land of Egypt, Exod. viii. 24. Do as Abraham, when he went to approach God and do ſacrifice on mount Moriah, Gen. xxii. 4, 5. "When he ſaw the place afar off, he ſaid to his young men, abide you here with the aſs, and I and the lad will go yonder and worſhip." He knew that if they had gone along with him, they would ſo diſtract him with their clamour, that he could not offer ſacrifice with that freedom and tranquillity of ſpirit requiſite.

7. It lies in examining the principles from which you act, and ends to which you move in duty. The principles muſt be faith and love; the belief of God's command, and the love of Chriſt, muſt conſtrain you to duty. Your ends muſt be, to glorify God and enjoy him; not as the Phariſees, to be ſeen of men; not legal ends, to get a reward. Selfiſh and legal ends are as a dead fly to ſpoil the ointment and make duties unſavoury to God. O for right principles, pure and ſpritual ends!

8. It conſiſts in labouring to get the heart in a ſuitable frame for converſe with God; as, 1. In a humble and ſelf-denied frame. 2. In a ſpiritual and heavenly frame. 3. In a fixed and ſtayed frame, calling in all ſtraying and wandering thoughts, breathing out that prayer, Pſalm

IMPROVEMENT.

Inference I. See hence the cauſe why ſo few get diſcoveries of God's glory, and wonders of mercy, in the ordinance, but meet with an hiding God; they do not ſanctify themſelves, and prepare their hearts in a ſuitable manner.

1. Uſe of reproof to ſeverals: 1. To thoſe who approach God under the power of wandering and roving thoughts, their minds are not fixed, ſanctified and prepared. 2. To thoſe whoſe minds are going after their covetouſneſs, when their bodies only are preſented before God. 3. To thoſe who are hypocritical and formal in their approaches to God. 4. To thoſe whoſe hearts are dull and drowſy in God's ſervice.

III. Uſe of trial. It concerns you upon this occaſion to examine if your hearts be ſanctified and prepared for approaching God to-morrow. It is highly neceſſary now to examine your ſouls, "Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat." I fear there are many unſanctified and unprepared hearts among us. And, in order to aſſiſt you therein, I ſhall give ſome remarks, both negatively and poſitively.

I. Negatively, marks of unſanctified hearts. 1. The ignorant heart that knows not Chriſt, nor has any uptaking of the way of ſalvation through his righteouſneſs. Such are unprepared, and incapable of gracious communion with God. See how the promiſe runs, Jer. xxiv. 7. "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they ſhall be my people, and I will be their God; for they ſhall return unto me with their whole heart." 2. The unbelieving heart is unprepared. 3. The impenitent heart. 4. The heart that harbours Chriſt's enemy. 5. The heart that hath no love to the friends of Chriſt. 7. No hungering and thirſting after Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. 8 That hath ſlight thoughts of his ordinances. 9. Indifference about the ſucceſs of the ordinances. 10. That reſiſts the motions of the Spirit. 11. The heart that is drowſy, and at no pains to waken itſelf. 12. That is a ſtranger to itſelf, and to ſelf-examination. Such hearts are unſanctified and unprepared for approaching to God to-morrow. 2. Poſitive marks of hearts in ſome meaſure ſanctified and prepared.

prepared. 1. Hearts ſenſible of their depravity and ſinfulneſs. 2. That are ſenſible of their need of Chriſt. 3. Hearts filled with revenge againſt ſin. 4. That are humble and lowly. 5. Hearts troubled for heart-plagues and ſins. 6. Hearts that conſent to the well-ordered covenant in all its articles. 7. Hearts that aim at communion and fellowſhip with God in every duty. 8. Hearts that hold on in cloſe purſuit after Chriſt, notwithſtanding diſcouragements and diſappointments, as Mary Magdalene, who would not leave the ſepulchre, when others left it. 9. Hearts that are unſatisfied with the beſt means and ordinances, if God be not found in them. 10. Hearts that are applying themſelves to every duty, in Chriſt's ſtrength, ſaying, without Chriſt I can do nothing. 11. Hearts that are troubled when they drive heavily in duty, and are weary of their remiſſneſs. 12. Hearts tender of the peace of God, afraid of ſin, and grieving the Spirit. 13. Hearts concerned about the ſucceſs of this ordinance, both with reſpect to themſelves and others. 14. Hearts concerned for want of ſufficient preparation, praying, with Hezekiah, for pardon and acceptance, though not cleanſed according to the purification of the ſanctuary, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

IV. Uſe of exhortation. O communicants, ſanctify yourſelves againſt to-morrow, that the Lord may come down and do wonders among you, wonders of mercy for your ſouls.

Motive 1. Conſider that the neat approach you are to make to God at his table to-morrow, is the neareſt approach you can poſſibly make on this ſide of death. Conſider what preparation God required of the Iſraelites for receiving the fiery law at Mount Sinai, Exod. xix. 10, 11. "God commanded them to ſanctify themſelves, waſh their clothes, and be ready againſt the third day, for upon that day the Lord would come down upon Mount Sinai, in ſight of all the people." What awful fear and trembling do you imagine was there among them, when God came down in a thick cloud, when the trumpet began to ſound, the thunder to crack, the mountain to ſmoke, and the earth to tremble under the weight of the great God deſcending on it. Well, ye ſhould be under the ſame awe of God in this ſolemn ordinance as they were. It is true, he comes not down with ſuch terror, to give a fiery law as on Mount Sinai, but to deliver the goſpel of peace from

Mount Sion. But mind, it is the ſame God that ſpeaks, hath the ſame majeſty, the ſame authority; and therefore you ſhould prepare as carefully, and be as humble before him, as the Iſraelites were. Were God to come down among you to-morrow in terrible majeſty, ſhould a thick cloud fill this houſe, and lightning break out, and ſhould you hear the thunder of his voice, "I am the Lord, thou ſhalt have no other gods before me," certainly ſuch a dreadful glory would make your hearts tremble within you, and the earth tremble beneath you. Well, then, God is come down as really among you as among the Iſraelites, bear him with the ſame reverence, and be as intent upon adoration as they were. Let not his gracious and familiar way of condeſcending to deal with you, tempt you to come with leſs preparation and reverence.

II. Conſider the nature of that God you are to approach to. 1. A great and mighty God, Pſal. lxxxix. 7, 8. "God is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of the ſaints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O Lord, God of hoſts, who is a ſtrong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulneſs round about thee?" Would we feaſt with a great King with filthy hands and garments? Joſeph prepared himſelf, by ſhaving himſelf and changing his raiment, before he went in to Pharaoh; and wilt thou not prepare thyſelf, by putting thy ſoul in the holieſt dreſs and humbleſt poſture, when thou art to go to the King of heaven and earth? 2. He is a jealous and omniſcient God, moſt jealous of his honour, and will come in to ſee the gueſts, Matth. xxii. 11, and then he will ſpy every unprepared and unſanctified gueſt; he notices the ſtate of your ſouls, the frame of your hearts, the ends of your communicating, and your preparation before hand. O then ſanctify yourſelves, before you come to the feaſt. 3. He is a pure and holy God; he cannot hold communion with unholy perſons, he will be ſanctified in them that come nigh him, Lev. x. 3. he will be attended as a holy God, in a holy manner. Did a holy angel ſet preſt with you at a certain place, againſt ſuch an hour, would you not prepare with all ſeriouſneſs and ſolemnity to attend him! Oh! but it is the God of angels that tryſts with you here, even the God before whom the angels adore, and cover their faces and feet with their wings, and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty. If the linen on the communion table, or veſſels that hold

the

the elements were foul, ye would be ready to exclaim against it; and no doubt there ought to be observed an outward decency in this respect; Christ would have the very room in good order where he was to eat the passover. But O it is a small crime to have a foul cloth or vessel for outward elements in respect of what it is to have a foul heart, or an unprepared soul to entertain a holy God, and to receive the body and blood of Christ.

3. Consider that God's people used always great preparation before the solemn approaching to Gen, Gen. xxxv. 1.—5. Where we see how solemnly Jacob prepared himself and his family, when by God's command he was going up to Bethel to sacrifice unto the Lord. "They change their garment, wash and make themselves clean, and put away their strange gods." How much more ought we prepare, when we go not only to Bethel, God's house, but to God's table, by changing our garments of sin, and putting on Christ's righteousness by faith, and putting away and mortifying our lusts and idols of jealousy! We see also the Psalmist's preparation for approaching to God, Psal. xxvi. 6. "I will wash my hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord." The Jews had great preparation for the passover, and so should we for the Lord's supper, that is come in its room. Wherefore we find the primitive Christians used to sit up whole nights at prayer before the Lord's supper, which they called *vigiliæ*.

4. Consider that the matter of this sacrament requires solemn preparation. Solomon directs us, when we are to eat with a ruler, to consider what is set before us, Prov. xxiii. 1. There are here the symbols of Christ's body and blood, rare food! It is a great sin to abuse common meat and drink, or to partake of these without some serious thought before hand. We would have vessels clean to hold our ordinary food; but here is soul food, heaven's dainties, the jewel of heaven. Christ's body in the sacrament must be wrapt in a clean soul, as well as his body by Joseph of Arimathea was wrapt in clean linen, and laid in a new tomb.

5. The duties to be performed at the Lord's table require preparation; viz: Covenanting with God, renewing our baptismal vow, expressing our love to Christ, feasting on a broken Christ.

6. You are naturally unfit for this ordinance; naturally you have neither habitual nor actual preparation, being dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, leprous, loathſome, carnal, and earthly-minded. Wherefore we muſt be quickened and purified, before we can hold communion with a holy God.

7. Becauſe communion with God would be altogether diſagreeable to an unſanctified ſoul, he would weary of it, and take no pleaſure in it.

8. Becauſe of the great advantage of this preparation, God will come to-morrow, and work wonders of mercy for ſuch as ſincerely aim at preparation. O then ſanctify yourſelves. *Queſt.* What are theſe wonders of mercy. *Anſ.* 1. He will raiſe dead ſouls out of the grave, and put life in them 2. He will warm cold hearts, and put ſpiritual heat in them. 3. He will ſoften hard rocky hearts, and make them tender and ſenſible. 4. He will cleave the rock, and make waters guſh out of it, the waters of penitential tears. 5. He will cure the paralytic trembling hand, that could hardly be ſtretched out, or grip to any thing. He will enable the weak ſoul to grip faſt to Chriſt, and ſubſcribe his name to the marriage-contract. 6. He will ſtrengthen the feeble knees and lame feet, and make the ſoul to run on in the way of his commandments with an enlarged heart. 7. He will kill ſtrong Goliaths and luſts, that defied the armies of the God of Iſrael. 8. He will fix a wandering heart, and fix it on God and things above. 9. He will heal a wounded conſcience by the balm of Gilead. 10. He will brighten a dark cloudy mind, and reſolve all the doubts and fears of a believer. 11. He will give a ſight of the king in his beauty, a view of the ſmiles of Chriſt's lovely face. 12. He will give a ſeal of the pardon of all your ſins. 13. He will give a Piſgah-view of Canaan, a ſight of the promiſed land. 14. He will feaſt the hungry, and fill them with the dainties of heaven. O theſe are rare wonders of grace that Chriſt will work for the prepared ſoul, O, preparation is your ſeed-time, receiving is your harveſt. Now, as a man ſoweth ſo ſhall he reap; "he that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly, and he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully," 2 Cor. ix. 6. It is in the duty of partaking, as in the duty of praying; the more prepared a man's heart is to pray, the greater is his return from heaven, Pſal. x. 17. "Thou wilt prepare their

their hearts, thou wilt cauſe thine ear to hear." So it may be ſaid in the caſe of receiving, thou wilt prepare the heart, thou wilt cauſe thine hand to give. When God prepares a man's heart for duty, it is a token he hath a hand prepared for mercy. Hence the Lord makes that gracious promiſe, Pſalm lxxxi. 10. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." *q. d.* I will enlarge my hand, as you enlarge your heart He ſaith, as Joſeph to his ſteward, Gen. xliv. 1. "Fill the mens ſacks as much as they can carry." So as Joſeph's brethren prepared ſacks in number and largeneſs, ſo did they carry corn away; and as you bring prepared hearts to the ordinance, ſo ſhall you reap benefit thereby.

6. Becauſe of the great danger in coming unprepared. If you do not ſanctify and prepare yourſelves, God will come and do wonders of judgment, wonders of wrath among you. 1. He may inflict bodily diſeaſes; as, 1. Cor. xi. 30. 2. He may ſend untimely death. 3. He may ſmite with deſertion from God. 4. He may ſend darkneſs on the mind. 5. He may ſmite with deadneſs and impenitency on the heart. 6. With decaying and withering on the gifts and graces. 7. He may ſend leanneſs and barenneſs on the ſoul. 8. He may ſmite with formality and lifeleſsneſs in duty. 9. With ſearedneſs on the conſcience, ſo as it ſhall challenge for no ſin. 10. He may ſend horror and terror on the conſcience, ſo as to make it a Magor-Miſſabib. 11. He may let ſatan looſe againſt you with temptations, atheiſtical and blaſphemous thoughts. 12. He may ſend you to hell from the communion-table, as Matth. xxii. 12, 13. "And he ſaid unto him, friend, how cameſt in hither not having on a wedding-garment? And he was ſpeechleſs. Then ſaid the king to the ſervants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and caſt him into utter darkneſs."

Queſt. How ſhall I get my heart ſanctified and prepared ſo as I may expect the Lord will come and do wonders of grace for me to-morrow. *Anſ.* There is a twofold preparation, habitual and actual; you muſt ſtudy both, and habitual preparation in the firſt place. *Queſt.* What is habitual preparation? *Anſ.* It hath ſeveral ingredients in it. 1. a covenant relation to God in Chriſt. 2. A principle of ſpiritual life. 3. A ſtate of peace with God. 4. The imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs. 5. An univerſal change by regenerating grace. 6. The inhabitation of

of the Spirit. 7. A holy converſation. 8. The ſtamp of a profeſſion. *Queſt.* 2. What is actual preparation for the Lord's ſupper? *Anſ.* 1. Sequeſtrating ourſelves from the world. 2. Self-examination. 3. Humiliation for ſin. 4. Renewing of our perſonal covenant with God in Chriſt. 5. Reformation of what is amiſs. 6. Exciting of all the graces to a lively exerciſe. 7. Meditation on the death and ſufferings of Chriſt. 8. Earneſt prayer to God for preparation and aſſiſtance in the work; and, after your utmoſt preparation, you muſt lay no ſtreſs thereon, but caſt yourſelf wholly on Chriſt for aſſiſtance, ſaying, "It is only in the Lord I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength." We ought to be denied to ourſelves, and to look with David to the Lord both for aſſiſtance and acceptance, Pſalm lxxi, 16. "I will go in ſtrength of the Lord, I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only." You ought to imitate king Aſa, who, though he had a great army to fight againſt the Ethiopians, yet cried to the Lord, and truſted in him alone for help, as you have it recorded, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. "And Aſa cried unto the Lord his God, and ſaid, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we reſt on thee, and in thy name we go out againſt this multitude." So let every communicant ſay, "Lord, all my ſtrength and preparations are nought, I have no power for celebrating this feaſt, help me, O Lord my God, for I reſt on thee, and in thy name I go to this great and weighty ordinance." And if you come forward to-morrow in this ſelf-denied and ſanctified frame, you have ground to expect that the Lord will do wonders of grace and mercy for you.

ACTION

ACTION SERMON.

From CANTICLES ii. 4. *He brought me to the banqueting houſe, and his banner over me was love.*

THE whole of this ſong is an allegorical deſcription of the myſterious union and communion betwixt Chriſt and his Church, under the perſons of a bridegroom and bride, which is a frequent metaphor made uſe of in Scripture. The forty-fifth pſalm is an abridgement of this ſong. In this chapter Chriſt and the Church ſeems to ſtrive who ſhall outvie each other in their commendations. Chriſt firſt commends the Church, and then the Church extols Chriſt. She compares him to the "apple-tree among the trees of the wood," verſe 3. Chriſt is a fruit-bearing tree, but the children of men are barren trees. And O but his ſhadow is refreſhing, and his fruit ſweet to a believer. But as if the ſhadow and fruits of an apple-tree were too low a ſimile, to ſet forth his excellency and goodneſs, ſhe tells us of the entertainment he gives her in the banqueting-houſe, in the text.

Where we have, 1. The place which the Spouſe was brought to, "the banqueting-houſe," or houſe of wine, *i. e.* of feaſting, becauſe wine is a principal part of feaſts; by which we are to underſtand the order, or means, whereby Chriſt conveys his graces and bleſſings to believers; and there is none of all the ordinances of the goſpel that may more fitly be called the banqueting or feaſting-houſe, than this of the Lord's ſupper, which is the great goſpel-feaſt wherewith Chriſt entertains his people on earth. Ordinances are called his banqueting-houſe, becauſe of the great plenty, variety, and riches of the bleſſings he thereby communicates to his people.

2. We have the perſon that brings her into this banqueting-houſe, and that is Chriſt, "HE brought me;" which ſhews, 1. Our want of right to theſe bleſſings of ourſelves. All our right is in Chriſt. 2. Our impotency to come to the feaſting-houſe; he muſt give us both ſtrength

ſtrength and preparation of ſoul. 3. The freeneſs of his grace in beſtowing theſe bleſſings on us.

3. The manner how ſhe is brought in, and that is under a *banner*, ſtandard, or enſign. It is a military word; banners or enſigns are uſed in camps and armies. Pſal. xx. 5. "We will rejoice in thy ſalvation, and in the name of our God will ſet up our banners." Her march or entry into this feaſting-houſe was joyful and triumphant, ſuch as that of people under a diſplayed banner; or colours lifted up. Colours are uſeful to draw, invite, engage, and lead people after their captain; and the lifting up or diſplaying of colours is a ſign to invite and direct thoſe of ſuch a party or ſide, to come to ſuch a place, or march ſuch a way. Now, what is the device or motto of Chriſt's banner? not like thoſe of other generals, a lion, an eagle, &c. but LOVE. The love of a crucified Jeſus is like a banner lifted up and diſplayed in the goſpel for inviting and engaging ſinners to come to him. Love is the banner that Chriſt lifts up and diſplays this day, to engage you to come to him, and liſt yourſelves under his banner. Love is that which leads to the banqueting-houſe, and furniſhes proviſion and entertainment for us there.

Obſerve I. That Chriſt has rich feaſts in the ordinances for entertaining his people's ſouls.

II. That the banner which Chriſt diſplays for drawing us to him is LOVE.

As to the firſt, I ſhall ſhew, 1. That Chriſt in the ordinances doth provide feaſts for his people's ſouls. 2. That the Lord's ſupper in particular is one principal feaſt that he prepares for them. 3. Why he prepares ſuch a feaſt. 4. Shall apply.

As to the firſt, it is evident, 1. From God's promiſe to his people, Pſal. xxxi. 8. "They ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thy houſe, and thou ſhalt make them drink of the river of thy pleaſures." Iſaiah xxv. 6. "And in this mountain ſhall the Lord of Hoſts make unto all people a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." This promiſe is concerning the goſpel times. From Prov. ix. 2. where *Wiſdom*, i. e. Chriſt, is ſaid to have "killed her beaſts, mingled her wine, and furniſhed her table." And, to name no more from Luke xv. where the father prepares the fatted calf for his penitent prodigal.

2. From

2. From the experience of God's people, as of David, Pſalm iv. 6. lxiii. 5. and lxv. 4. and particularly from the experience of the church in the text, God's people can ſet to their ſeal to this truth.

As to the ſecond head, that the Lord's ſupper is one principal feaſt, which the Lord prepares for his people. Wherefore it is called, *the table of the Lord.* 1 Cor. x. 21. It is called *a feaſt on the ſacrifice of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. *A wedding-feaſt*, Mat. xxiii. 4. In theſe places the Lord's ſupper is principally pointed at. I ſhall here ſhew wherein the Lord's ſupper reſembles a feaſt; yea, it is not an ordinary feaſt, it is a rich, royal, and magnificent feaſt.

1. At a feaſt there is rich and noble proviſion. So here there is more than bread and wine, even the body and blood of Chriſt, "My fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed," John vi. 55. What bread and wine affords to the body, viz. ſtrength, comfort, and nouriſhment, the ſame doth the body and blood of Chriſt, received by faith, yield to the ſoul. Here is ſpiritual food to the hungry ſoul, bread that ſtrengthens man's heart, and wine that cheers the fainting ſpirits. Behold here is wiſdom's gates, and wiſdom's feaſt. It is good for us to be here, good to wait at her door poſts. Here the breaſts of conſolation are drawn forth, here we may ſuck and be ſatisfied. Here the fountain of life, and the wells of ſalvation are opened, the ſtone rolled from the well's mouth. Here is the hidden manna, angels food, bread from heaven, yea the fruits of the tree of life, that grows in midſt of the paradiſe of God. Here is the water of life that ſprings from beneath the throne of God and the Lamb, clear as chryſtal; if you get but one drop of it, it ſhall be an everlaſting ſpring in your ſoul, ſo that you need not thirſt after carnal comforts and enjoyments.—Here are the grapes of Canaan, the fruits that grow in the land of promiſe; yea cluſters of theſe grapes are at this feaſt, the firſt fruits of heaven. In a word, there is at this ſpiritual feaſt for the ſoul to feed on, Chriſt crucified, and all his benefits and purchaſe: And are there not many diſhes and delicacies here?

1. Here is pardon of ſin ſealed to a believer. O is not this a rare feaſt and excellent cheer, Matth. ix. 2. "Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee." Here you get Chriſt's blood, which was ſhed for many, for the remiſſion of ſins. Here we claſp about a crucified Chriſt

as the great propitiatory ſacrifice for our ſins, and accept of him as the Lord our righteouſneſs; and thus we receive the remiſſion of ſins. Here God ſaith to a believer, as Nathan to David, 2 Sam. xii. 13. "The Lord hath put away thy ſins thou ſhalt not die." Here we hear the voice of joy and gladneſs, which hath made many a broken bone to rejoice. Is there any thing more ſweet than pardon to a condemned man near the place of execution? And what can give more joy, than a free diſcharge to a ſinner arreſted by juſtice, and drawn to hell's door to be caſt into that priſon for debt, out of which there is no redemption.

2. We have peace and friendſhip with God; O rare diſh! not only to be freed of a burden of debt, that would have weighed us down to hell; and for which millions already have been carried thither, and are roaring under it without hope; but alſo to be received into ſpecial favour with God: For in this ſacrament a covenant of peace and friendſhip is ſealed and confirmed. O muſt it not be a ſweet cordial, for an enemy, a rebel, to be owned as a ſpecial favourite of the King of heaven, ſo that the ſoul may ſend a challenge to hell and earth, and bid defiance to men and devils, Rom viii. 33, 34. "Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea rather, that it is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us." And you may ſay with David, Pſalm iv. 8. "I will both lay me down in peace, and ſleep: For thou, Lord, only makeſt me to dwell in ſafety." Come life, come death, I am ſafe; my conſcience is diſburdened, and I am at eaſe.

1. Adoption is another of the diſhes at this feaſt. You are not only made a friend, but a ſon and heir; and in this ſacrament you get ſaſine and infeftment of the children's privileges, relation and inheritance. And here God ſaith, I will be a Father to thee; and, ſon, thou ſhalt be ever with me, and all that I have is thine. Thou ſhalt have my bleſſing and love, the ſmiles of my face, the kiſſes of my mouth, and the arms of my grace to ſupport and preſerve thee. Thou ſhalt have my Son for thy elder Brother, thy Prieſt and Advocate; my angels to be thy guards; my providence to be thy protector and manager: Thou ſhalt have manna in the wilderneſs, and water

water out of the rock. Thou ſhalt be my heir, and joint heir with my eternal Son and Firſt-born. Thou ſhalt have heaven for thy home, Chriſt's throne for thy ſeat, and a kingdom for thy portion; an honourable maintenance while here, and an incorruptible inheritance hereafter.

4. Another diſh is peace of conſcience. This is one of the precious legacies which Chriſt leaves in his Teſtament, which is here ſealed, John xiv. 27. It is here Chriſt ſpeaks peace to his people and to his ſaints, here he breathes peace upon them, as in Luke xxiv. 36. Do doubts and fears ariſe within you, that hinders you to believe the good news, as with the diſciples; ſo there is that in this ſacrament which may check all theſe fears, Luke xxiv. 38, 39. "Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myſelf; handle me and ſee," &c. O but the prints of the nails may calm the doubting conſcience, and quiet thy fears.

5. Supplies and ſtrength to our weak and decayed graces. Here Chriſt's ſtore-houſe is opened, and we may get grace for grace out of his fulneſs; here the ſmoaking flax may be kindled into a flame, and the bruiſed reed find ſupport; here you may get weak faith ſtrengthened, cold love enflamed, weak deſire kindled, repentance renewed, hope made lively, the ſoul fitted and fortified for trials and ſufferings, and prepared for paſſing through the valley of the ſhadow of death: Yea, in a word, you may get all your wants ſupplied, all your grievances redreſſed, and maladies remedied. Here you may get a meal that will both ſatisfy, and beget a ſtomach in you, that will prove life to your ſouls and poiſon to your luſts. It is here the empty ſoul is filled, the ſtarving creature fed, the poor beggar enriched, the hard heart ſoftened, the cold heart warmed, the dead ſoul quickened, the paralytick hand cured, the blind eye enlightened, the thirſty heart ſatisfied, the feeble knee ſtrengthened, the ſtraightened heart enlarged, the wandering heart fixed, the creeping deſires elevated, the cloudy ſoul brightened, and the doubting ſoul reſolved. O are not theſe gracious and bleſſed changes! Here you may get ſtrength againſt your ſtrong luſts and temptations, and furniture for every duty, ſo as you may pray with enlargement, hear with comfort, praiſe with elevation of mind, and meditate with delight.

6. Here is Chriſt's gracious preſence, and a ſight of his countenance: That is a rare delicacy in this feaſt, that ſatisfies the ſoul, Pſalm xvi. ult. "In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy," that was the Pſalmiſt's heaven upon earth. It is here Chriſt tryſts with his people, here he walks with them, and is held by them in the galleries; here he viſits them, and holds communion with them, intimates his love, and kiſſes them with the kiſſes of his mouth. Here they ſee the King in his beauty, here the ſaints have beheld the beauty of the Lord, Pſalm xxvii. 4. O this is worth our while. O let it be our errand this day to meet with Chriſt, and ſee his bleſſed face. God's people in all ages have placed their happineſs here. Abraham rejoiced in a ſight of Chriſt, though afar off, at 1900 years diſtance. The wiſe men thought it worth their while, to undertake a long journey from the eaſt to ſee him, though but new born. Old Simeon deſires to ſee no more on earth, after he gets a ſight of him, though a child. Zacheus ran and climbed up a tree to ſee him, though deſpiſed of men. O now he is ſhining in glory, ſhall we not deſire a ſight of him? David deſired it as his "one thing," Pſal. xxvii. though he then wanted his throne and kingdom. The Spouſe ſeeks it as her one thing, Cant. iii. 3. "Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth?" O but a ſight of him would make your face to ſhine, a ſight of him in his love, in his dyed garments, treading out the wine-preſs alone.

7. Another diſh is, the comfort of his Spirit, and the clearing up your intereſt in Chriſt and glory, a ſight of heaven and your names written in the book of life, ſo that all your fears may be ſcattered, objections anſwered, doubts reſolved, and likewiſe the evidences of your graces cleared up to you, ſo that, though you doubted before if you had faith, yet now you may be enabled to ſay with the poor man, "Lord, I believe." You doubted before of your love, but now you may ſay with Peter, "Lord, thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee." You doubted before of your intereſt in Chriſt, but now you can ſay with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God, with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and with Paul, "I know in whom I have believed."

Thus I have ſhewn you ſome of the rich proviſion and noble entertainment prepared in this banquet before you: yea, you ſee it is not only rich proviſion, but there are choice

choice rarities here, hidden manna, angels food; yea, not only choice, but plenty and variety, food adapted to our ſouls nature and faculties; food to nouriſh, ſtrengthen, delight and refreſh the ſoul. Here is food ſuitable to all the faculties, light to the mind, peace to the conſcience, ſatisfaction to the will, and food for all the affections. Here love may ſatisfy itſelf in embracing the chief among ten thouſands. Deſire may ſatisfy itſelf in claſping the deſire of all nations. Delight may here bathe itſelf in the river of pleaſure. In a word, what can the ſoul need but is here? For Chriſt is made of God to us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption. Here is precious blood to purge away our deep guilt; here is perfect righteouſneſs to cover our naked ſoul; here are riches, and unſearchable riches in Chriſt, righteouſneſs for our juſtification, and grace for our ſanctification; here all things are given us richly to enjoy, here hope may feed, on the great and precious promiſes.

2. At feaſts there uſed to be lavers for the gueſts to waſh in, as at the marriage feaſt in Cana of Galilee, where were ſix water-pots ſet for purification, John ii. 6. Doth ſenſe of defilement ſcare you from partaking? Behold here is a fountain opened, Zech xiii. 1. O come and waſh in it, that ye may be fit to compaſs God's altar, and ſit down at his table.

3. At banquets there uſes to be mirth and chearfulneſs; ſo here, when prodigal ſinners firſt return to their Father, he hath mirth and muſic to entertain them. See Luke xv. 24. The tidings of Chriſt's purchaſe, and the promiſes, are the beſt muſic and melody in the world: The news of what he hath done and ſuffered, ought to fill your hearts and lips with the high praiſes of God, and thankful admiration of Chriſt and redeeming love. O believers, conſider, you are not come like mourners to a funeral, but like children to your Father's feaſt, a royal feaſt, "I will bring them to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my houſe of prayer, ſaith the Lord:" So that ye may eat this bread with joy, and drink this wine with a merry heart, in hopes of God's accepting you and your ſacrifice, Eccleſ. ix. 7.

4. At feaſts there is the maſter of the feaſt, to bid the gueſts welcome; as ready is the Father to welcome the prodigal child. Chriſt is the Maſter of this feaſt, he hath ſent

ſent forth his ſervants, to call and invite you to the feaſt, and now he is come to the table to bid you welcome, as Cant. v. 1. "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

5. At feaſts there are ſervants to attend the gueſts; here the miniſters are ſtewards and ſervants to attend Chriſt's gueſts at this feaſt: And their work is to direct you to the table, and to give every one their portion of meat in due ſeaſon. God grant we give not the childrens bread to dogs, and them that have no right to it. We know not the heart, ye all have profeſſed yourſelves to be children, O do not mock God and his ſervants.

6. Here is a bleſſing craved by the Maſter of this feaſt; yea, he has commanded, and will command the bleſſings, and his ſervants are to pray for the virtue of that bleſſing to this table.

7. At a feaſt there is good company. O there is rare company at this feaſt. "The King ſits at his table," Cant. i. 12. even the King of glory. Chriſt himſelf is there preſent, and the Father alſo; for in this feaſt we have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, through the holy Spirit. Here the children of God, yea the glorious ſaints above, ſit at this table, and ſhare with us in this feaſt. It is true, they ſit at the upper end of the table, and we at the lower end. They have better appetites, better muſic; they feed on a naked Chriſt, we by ſigns and ſymbols; but we have all the ſame cheer. O what a great and good company is here! We read of Belſhazzar that made a feaſt for a thouſand of his lords, Dan. v. 1. But here is a feaſt for many thouſands, yea, to all believers, Jews and Gentiles, an open free feaſt, Iſa. xxv. And we read that Ahaſuerus made a feaſt to all his princes and ſervants, which laſted one hundred and eighty days, Eſth. i. 4. But here is a feaſt which laſts to all eternity.

III. As to the third head, why he prepares ſuch a feaſt for his people? *Anſ.* 1. To be a ſolemn memorial of his love to ſinners, in ſuffering and dying for them; and this memorial is to be kept up through all generations till Chriſt's ſecond coming. Juſt ſo the paſſover was a commemorating feaſt to the Iſraelites of their protection and deliverance from the bondage of Egypt.

2. To diſcover his infinite riches and goodneſs to poor ſinners. So Ahaſuerus, Eſther i. 3. 4. "made a feaſt to all

all his princes and servants, to shew them the riches of his excellent majesty."

3. To express the joy and satisfaction he hath in the believer's coming to him. The Father of the prodigal evidenced his joy for the return of his Son (who was dead and now alive, lost and found) by a feast and music. O believers, this is the day of the gladness of Christ's heart; glad is he to see his prodigals returning, and this feast is the welcome home.

4. To express his love to believers, and that he might have opportunity of nearer communion and fellowship with them. At feasts, people have great freedom and familiarity with one another, mutual expressions of kindness, communicating of secrets, rejoicing in one another. O but many a poor soul has been ravished with Christ's love here, and with the wine of his consolation; he hath made rare discoveries of his love to them.

5. To ratify and confirm the covenant between God and us. It was usual in the eastern countries to ratify contracts and covenants, by eating and drinking together. So was it in the covenant made between Isaac and Abimelech, see Gen. xxvi. 28, 30. And so it was a federal rite between Laban and Jacob, Gen. xxxi. 46. between the Israelites and Gibeonites, Joshua ix. 14. between David and Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 20. Consider then, this is a covenanting feast, here a solemn bargain between God and us is sealed and ratified. What is the bargain? See the tenor of the covenant, Acts xvi. 31. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Here we engage to believe in Christ, and Christ engages to save us. Here God promises to be to us a God, and we promise to be to him a people. Here God promises and seals the benefits of the covenant on his part, and we promise and seal the duties of the covenant on our part. Here God's giving the signs is a seal on his part, and our taking them is a seal on ours. Here Christ gives us his soul and body to save us, and we give our souls and bodies to serve him. Here God binds himself to be faithful, and we bind ourselves to be constant. Yea, we here swear allegiance to Christ over his broken body and shed blood.

6. To be a cordial to his poor fainting ones, and for strengthening the weak and feeble of his people. Many of his people are sore cast down, and have dwelt long with fears and horrors; and this is relief to them, here Christ smiles,

ſmiles, and ſpeaks peace. Others are weak in grace, here he brings them ſupplies; here the decayed have renewed their ſtrength; here the lame have been made to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to ſing.

7. To fortify and encourage againſt all difficulties and trials we may meet with in Chriſt's ſervice. We are to look for reproaches and perſecutions, if we hold faſt by Chriſt. Satan and the world will not be idle, ſee Heb. x. 23. Here is a meal and cordial to hearten us for it; and ſome have met with that in this feaſt which hath made them chearfully venture on ſufferings, and reſolve never to leave Chriſt. An hour of ſealing animates the ſoul for an hour of ſuffering. If the Redeemer ſmile on us, and his love be ſhed abroad in our hearts, we can bear any thing, ſuffer any thing, loſe any thing, and not be diſcouraged. O then come, and take in proviſion againſt the evil day, for ye have a wilderneſs to go through. Elijah was excited to take a double meal, for his journey was long. So if you would have ſtrength for your journey, O here you may have it; here is food more ſubſiſting, durable, and nouriſhing than Elijah's cake and cruiſe of water, of which he ate and drank, and in the ſtrength of that meal went forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb the mount of God, 1 Kings xix. 6. 8. What bread and wine afford to the body, the ſame doth Chriſt's body and blood in the ſacrament, received by faith, afford to the ſoul, viz. ſtrengthening, comforting, nouriſhment. And who but a madman would be ſo cruel to himſelf, as to deny his faint body its ſtated meals and relief? O may it not hearten you, that whatever your ſtraits, bodily wants, or neceſſities are, and however ye may be deſpiſed, you have a great King that honours you, owns you, takes you to feaſt with himſelf here, and will ſhortly call you to the marriage ſupper of the Lamb above.

8. To wean you from the vain pleaſures and comforts of the world, and from ſenſual delights; and to make you long for that glorious and full feaſt above. This is a foretaſte of it, and ſhould ſtir up a hunger for it; for this feaſt is the firſt fruits of heaven.

Improvement I. I infer what a horrid calumny it is, that is raiſed againſt the ways of Chriſt by the devil and the world, that they are ſad and melancholy, of purpoſe to fright men from them. No, you ſee Chriſt has royal feaſts for his people, the world knows little of. A believer

liever would not give a crumb of this ſpiritual feaſt for many days of worldly feaſts.

II. Admire his condeſcenſion, that the Lord of glory ſhould make ſuch a feaſt for beggars, ſee Luke xiv. 21. Poor worms, vile ſinners, will he call us, that deſerve not a dog's crumb beneath the table, to come and ſit down with the children at the table? O what are we that he ſhould deal ſo with us, ſinners vile as the mire, and black as hell. You have far greater cauſe to wonder at this privilege than Mephibosheth, 2 Sam. ix. 7. "David ſaid to him, I will ſurely ſhew thee kindneſs for Jonathan thy father's ſake, and will reſtore thee all the land of Saul thy father, and thou ſhalt eat bread at my table continually." Obſerve his anſwer, "What is thy ſervant, that thou ſhouldſt look upon ſuch a dead dog as I am?"

III. How unexcuſable are they who ſlight this feaſt, that has coſt Chriſt ſo dear, more than ten thouſand kingdoms? He has made all things ready, and has been calling ſinners to come. Conſider how grievouſly the King took it, when he made his marriage-ſupper, and thoſe that were bidden would not come, Luke xiv. 24.

IV. *Exhortation.* O communicants who have been preparing for this feaſt, come away to the marriage, all things are ready on Chriſt's part. *Object.* But how ſhall I get acceſs to the banqueting houſe? *Anſw.* Employ Chriſt to bring you in. It is he alone that brings his ſpouſe in. You may come to the table, and get the outward elements, but unleſs Chriſt bring you in to the banqueting houſe, ye will not be taken in. It is only Chriſt can give you appetites, and clothe you with the wedding-garment; it is only he that can quicken the dead ſoul, and ſtrengthen the weak, "I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening me," ſaith Paul. He only can ſend the Comforter, the north and ſouth gales of the Spirit. He only can remove the burden of ſin, and take away the heart of ſtone, diſſolve doubts, and ſcatter clouds. O look and long for him then to bring you in, and ſay with thoſe in John xi. 56. "What think ye, will he come to the feaſt?" Will he bring me into the banqueting houſe; will he touch my heart and take me by the hand? Poor ſinner, I will tell you whom he will bring in. It is true, it is not every one; many come thronging to the feaſt that have no ground to expect to be taken in. But there are ſome he will bring in, and

they are theſe: 1. The hungry and thirſty ſinner, that is longing for a meeting with Chriſt, ſenſible of his needs and wants, and crying, O a crumb from his hand, a drop from his wounds, a ſeal of pardon from that table, elſe I die. Theſe have a promiſe to be filled. 2. The poor broken hearten humbled ſoul, that has a deep ſenſe of his own nothingneſs and unworthineſs, ſaying I am not worthy that Chriſt ſhould come under my roof, and far leſs worthy that I ſhould come under Chriſt's roof, my ſins are ſo many and great. Is there any ſtanding afar off with the publican, afraid to come to the holy table, ſaying, "God be merciful to me a ſinner," Chriſt will come to ſuch, Iſa. lvii. 15. "He will revive the ſpirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones." 3. The poor praying and wreſtling ſoul, that has been putting up many a petition, ſigh and groan for acceſs, ſaying, "O that I knew where to find him!" O when wilt thou come unto me, how long wilt thou hide thy face? O have ye been ſtorming heaven with your cries laſt week, laſt night, and this morning? Have ye been knocking for the opening of the door of the banqueting houſe? He will come and bring ſuch in. 4. All the friends and lovers of Chriſt will be taken in. O ſinner, art thou ſuch, ſee thy warrant and thy welcome, Cant. vi. 1. O, ſay ſome, I cannot be a friend to Chriſt; but I wiſh him well, and his people and intereſt. I cannot ſay I'm a true lover of Chriſt; but I find my heart glowing and warming with deſire to him, and I would give all the world I had theſe glowings kindled into a flame. Take courage, poor ſoul, Chriſt will not quench the ſmoaking flax, he will blow it up into a flame, and take thee in. 5. All ſincere covenanting ſouls, that have been yeſternight and this morning honeſtly conſenting to the bargain offered in the goſpel, content to cloſe with Chriſt as he offers himſelf, to renounce their idols and luſts, and to give Chriſt their hearts. Is there any ſoul willing to open to Chriſt; O then he will take you in, Rev. iii. 20. "If any man open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me." O poor ſinners, that never opened your hearts to Chriſt, be perſuaded to open to a bountiful Lord; open your hearts to him, and he will open his banqueting houſe to you. O ſinner, haſt thou no need of Chriſt's dainties? Art thou not a poor, periſhing, ſtarving ſoul, a famiſhed prodigal,

and

and needeſt thou not the bread of life? Chriſt is at the door with variety of bleſſings, and ready to open his banqueting-houſe to you, O will ye open to him? Conſider that if ye do not accept of Chriſt, he may paſs ſuch a ſentence againſt you, as in Luke xiv. 24. "For I ſay unto you, that none of theſe men which were bidden ſhall taſte of my ſupper." O, will it not be dreadful to ſee the ſaints ſitting at the royal feaſt in heaven, and you yourſelves ſhut out, like a company of ſtarving beggars ſtanding about the doors where the marriage-ſupper is kept? They ſee the lights, and behold the rich diſhes carried up; they hear the mirth and muſic of the gueſts, but not a bit comes to their ſhare.

But as for you that are content to accept of Chriſt on his own terms, come away to the marriage-ſupper, Chriſt the Maſter of the feaſt invites you, and will make you welcome. And in coming to this feaſt, obſerve the following directions.

1. Come with holy awe and reverence of God, the Maſter and Maker of this feaſt. If ye were going to a prince's table, you would have ſome awe upon your ſpirits; mind the Maſter of this feaſt is a glorious, holy and jealous God, that will not be mocked.

2. Come with a pure heart and clean hands, waſh your hearts in the tears of true repentance, cleanſe them of all filth, through the blood of Jeſus, which cleanſeth from all ſin, otherwiſe you will affront the Maſter of this feaſt. Should a beggar that has been wallowing in a puddle, intrude himſelf in that condition into a prince's company, ſit down at his table, and dip his beſmeared hands into the ſame diſh with him, how would he take it? O come not with filthy rags and filthy hands to this holy table, but repent of every ſin, renounce every ſin, and reſolve againſt every ſin.

3. Come with a holy fear and jealousy over yourſelves, afraid that you be not ready. Cry, Lord, let me not wrong Chriſt or my own ſoul, this day! O let me not betray the Son of God with a kiſs; O let me not murder Chriſt or my own ſoul, contract blood-guiltineſs, or drink damnation. O what if I want the wedding-garment when the King comes in to view the gueſts!

4. Come with a broken and bleeding heart to view the ſlain Lamb. O will not the dying groans and bleeding wounds of Chriſt move you? When you ſee him ſtretched

out and nailed, will ye not cry, O behold my Saviour that was nailed for me, dying with love in his heart, and ſmiles in his face; O it was my ſins drove in theſe nails. Remember, the ſun vailed his face in the time of Chriſt's ſufferings, fainted at the ſight, and could not look; O vail yours, retire inwardly, and take amends of ſin the cauſe of his ſufferings.

5. Have on the wedding garment; viz. Faith in a Redeemer's righteouſneſs. Come relying on him for acceptance, and look to him for ſtrength and furniture; look up to him, O dead ſoul, for life and quickening. How unſeemly will it be to ſee a company of dead corpſe ſet down to the feaſt of the living God? O be acting faith in a lively manner on Chriſt, for faith is the life of all: O come reach hither thy finger, and behold Chriſt's hands, reach hither thy hand, and feel the prints of the nails, and mark of the ſpear, and cry with Thomas, "My Lord and my God; here will I reſt, and here will I ſtay." In the clefts of his wounds my ſoul ſhall take ſhelter, where juſtice ſhall not reach me.

6. Come with love, for it is a love-feaſt. O love Chriſt, that is both the Maſter, the Maker, and matter of the feaſt. Chriſt's heart is burning and bleeding with love to you, O let yours do ſo to him. Without love ye have nothing to do here. Come alſo with love and charity to all men, be ready to forgive every one, as ye would have God to forgive you.

7. Come with panting and thirſting deſires, to ſee and meet with Chriſt, ſaying, I care not who be here, if Chriſt be abſent. O the deſire of my ſoul is towards him and the remembrance of his name.

8. Come with expectation, depending only on Chriſt's merits, God's promiſes, and free mercy in Chriſt, greedily expecting ſomething from Chriſt this day, as the poor cripple man did from Peter and John, Acts iii. 4. 5. "And Peter faſtening his eyes upon him, with John, ſaid, look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive ſomething of them." We ordinarily receive little, becauſe we expect little. O raiſe your deſires and expectations, for you come to a merciful and a liberal God, that will not let the expectation of the poor periſh, Pſalm ix. 18.

9. Come reſigning yourſelves to Chriſt. Give up your hearts to Chriſt, ſaying, Lord, I have no ſacrifice to bring but

but my heart. O that it were a thouſand times better than it is, it ſhould be thine; Lord, accept of the poor ſacrifice.

10. Come with admiration and praiſe. O the high praiſes of God ſhall be in our mouths: wonder and praiſe God for the contrivance of our redemption, and for making choice of ſuch a Redeemer. O wonder and praiſe our Redeemer for leaving his throne of glory for a manger; yea, for a croſs and a grave, and all for the ſake of us. Say, "Lord, what am I, that thou ſhouldſt part with thy glory, yea, with thy blood and life for ſuch a wretch as I am? O how am I aſhamed, that I love thee no more; my heart is cold, my tongue is ſlow, I cannot love, I cannot praiſe. O let heaven and earth, angels and men, join and extol his free grace and wondrous love." If ye come in ſuch a frame, you will be taken into the banqueting houſe, and his banner over you will be love. And this leads me to ſpeak a word to the *banner of love*.

Chriſt upon the croſs hath lifted up a banner of love, he hath declared himſelf willing to receive every ſoul that will come under his banner, and liſt himſelf to fight under his colours. As ye are profeſſing to leave the devil's ſtandard, and come to Chriſt, by taking your ſacrament, (which uſed to be a military oath among the Romans) and ſwearing allegiance to Chriſt; O mind ye are not to draw back, but to follow the Captain of your ſalvation, and fight againſt the devil, the world, and the fleſh. If ye perjure yourſelves, and return to your old ways, ſaying, welcome, drunken cups, bloody oaths, lying, &c. ye will incur all the curſes of the law, and vengeance of the goſpel alſo. O ye will ſink deeper into hell than others, and ye will be made to cry, would to God I had been the ſon of a Pagan or Mahometan. Wherefore own and ſtand by the banner of Chriſt; and to encourage you to ſtedfaſtneſs, keep in mind that you have, 1. A noble General, who hath already conquered, and is ready to join you in the fight. 2. A noble cauſe; it is the Lord's battle, they are God's enemies, and enemies to your ſouls alſo. 3. You have noble weapons, the ſhield of faith, ſword of the Spirit, &c. they are impenetrable and full proof. 4. Noble pay, a white ſtone, a crown, and a new name, grace here, and glory hereafter. 5. Ye

are